

MARIO SEPI'S TERM AS PRESIDENT: EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

October 2008 - October 2010

Rights and solidarity
to guide globalisation:
The thread running
throughout the Sepi
presidency



European Economic and Social Committee

Introduction

Mario Sepi's term as president of the EESC has been marked by an extremely complex economic situation created by the financial, economic and social crises of these last years, not to mention worsening poverty and marginalisation and, one positive event, the Lisbon Treaty's entry into force.

The international situation has been broadly characterised by the accelerating pace at which emerging countries are establishing themselves in the never-ending process of globalisation.

It is in this setting that the Committee's activities have evolved over the last two years.

In addition to the numerous sectoral civil society consultation initiatives and detailed studies carried out by EESC bodies in various areas, the president decided, with the Bureau's approval, to emphasise a set of core issues, while nevertheless choosing a very specific slogan: "Rights and solidarity to guide globalisation".

The main effort went into making an incisive contribution to the institutions of the European Union and, at the same time, finding new ways for the most significant manifestations of civil society to be heard.

A further distinguishing feature of this presidency has been the attempt to breathe life into the Committee by maximising the profile of its most important work and the most

significant of its opinions adopted in recent years. The ultimate aim here has been to project an image of itself to the outside world as an institution that can speak boldly and with one voice for civil society in Europe.

This desire led to the drafting of the "Programme for Europe: proposals of civil society", adopted by the EESC – under the guidance of its president – during the March 2009 plenary session and then presented to the other European institutions and a large number of representatives of national institutions and civil society organisations in the EU's Member States.

The EESC's Programme for Europe, which was issued just as the renewal of the European Parliament was in full swing and in anticipation of a new European Commission, developed a number of proposals relating to European civil society's main concerns. These were extrapolated from key opinions already adopted by the Committee on four fundamental themes: economic recovery, fundamental rights and the European social model, sustainable development, and governance.

The "Programme for Europe: proposals of civil society" therefore was the cement in the Sepi presidency, and an essential point of reference for the Committee as a whole.



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The economic challenges facing Europe and responses to the crisis: the EESC working towards a roadmap for sustainable economic and social recovery

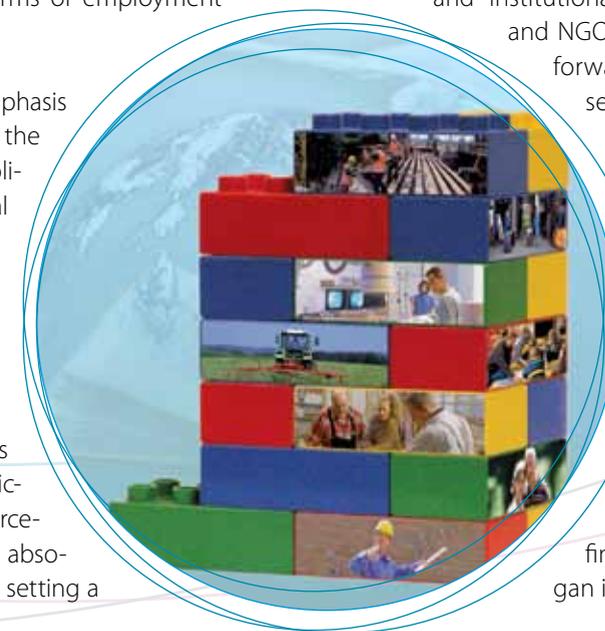
At the heart of the Committee’s concerns and in the midst of one of the most serious financial crises to strike Europe since the establishment of the European Union, the challenges of the economy and of competitiveness emerged as vital spheres of action for the social partners and for civil society at the very beginning of Mario Sepi’s term in the autumn of 2008.

When Sepi chose the slogan “Rights and solidarity to guide globalisation”, he was fully aware of an approaching phase in the international crisis that would find Europe in the grip of grave social tensions, suffering and serious repercussions in terms of employment and welfare.

The focus and emphasis on rights and on the importance of a solidarity-based social model were, from the very outset, the guiding principles of Sepi’s term of office. This was due not only to the crisis but also to his fundamental conviction that the enforcement of rights is an absolute prerequisite for setting a

positive course for globalisation, in order to guide it and counteract the risks it entails for those most vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion.

Under the direction of its president, the Committee thus approached the crisis from a range of financial, economic, environmental and social angles through a well-defined process of initiatives, meetings with institutional representatives, and conference cycles involving representatives from the broadest possible spectrum of civil society categories: entrepreneurs, trade unions, members of financial institutions and banks, experts, economists and institutionalists, political leaders and NGOs. The aim was to put forward shared solutions, seek answers and suggest actions and measures so as to fuel debate and to contribute to the analysis and development of the response strategies through which the EU institutions are required to tackle the major economic and financial crisis that began in 2008.



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The process hinged on three key stages:

- Two conferences were held in Brussels entitled “Rien ne va plus”, in January 2009, and “Rien n’est joué” in March 2009. The first focused on the financial and economic challenges, and the second on social responses needed for the recovery of the real economy. On the one hand, therefore, there is the need to rethink the new structure of the social market economy in the light of the failure of the current model for the functioning of financial markets, based on self-regulation, in order to set new EU-level rules to regulate these markets. On the other hand, meanwhile, there is the need to anticipate, as of now, the social challenges on the table and the problems that have marked the crisis with respect to social welfare systems, the management of social buffers, and re-skilling and investment in vocational training in order to respond to job losses and deteriorating social conditions in many sectors of European society.



- The “Pre-summit on Employment” was held in Prague in May 2009. It was attended by Commission President Barroso, and served as a preliminary to the European Employment Summit, held the following day, for which Barroso had expressly requested the EESC’s political contribution. This provided Mario Sepi with the opportunity to present Barroso with an official document setting out the Committee’s recommendations to the summit on avoiding a deep social crisis and triggering economic recovery in Europe. The

premise for these recommendations was the analysis of the European Commission’s recovery plan, which despite the interesting measures it put forward, seemed too cautious and inadequate to address the complexity of the problem. In the view of the Committee and its president, the real challenge is economic governance: the EU, in the thick of the crisis, should be capable of laying the foundations for genuinely coordinated economic policies.

What the Commission was being asked to do was to put forward proposals for broader and more specific measures that would make more appropriate resources and institutional mechanisms available to the Member States.

- Finally, the conference held in March 2010 in Brussels, to close the cycle of conferences launched a year earlier by Mr Sepi, resulted in the EESC’s adoption of An EU Roadmap for a Sustainable Economic and Social Recovery, aimed at emerging from the crisis with a stronger development model capable of withstanding any future threat of a comparable crisis. Through this initiative, the Committee gave its opinion on the most recent strategy launched by the EU, the Europe 2020 strategy, in order to present a roadmap that sets out concrete recovery measures following this most serious social and economic global crisis. The following elements were stressed: (1) Support and responsibility: the need for economic

and social support measures that are compatible with measures to strengthen public finances; (2) Construction: economic reform proposals aimed at the long-term sustainability of European competitiveness.

The continuity of political action and commitment with respect to the economic challenges and necessary efforts towards strengthening EU economic governance have been constant throughout Sepi’s term of office, which was set apart by the participation of top-ranking institutional leaders in EESC events. The presence of Barroso at these conferences, the shared proposals and contributions requested from the EESC and their timely and efficient delivery to the European Commission due to productive bilateral relations between Sepi and Barroso and cooperation with several Commission departments (participants in EESC initiatives have included Commissioners Špidla, Almunia, Ševčovič and Barnier, to name but a few) testify to the level of representativeness achieved over the last two years by the Committee, as one of the main EU institutional interlocutors on key economic policy issues.

In line with this strategy, Commissioner Barnier’s presentation of the Commission’s proposals on the regulation of financial markets to the July 2010 plenary session was the culmination of the EESC’s interaction with other institutions in order to represent civil society organisations.

In this way, Mario Sepi forcefully reaffirmed, albeit following the lack of global consensus at the Toronto G20 Summit, the need to implement the June European Council’s proposal to tax financial transactions so that banks can share the burden of paying for the crisis and rebuilding public finances in EU countries.

As pointed out by Jean-Claude Juncker during an important Eurogroup meeting, held during these months of crisis: “economic packages will not bring the expected results if the credit sector does not react better to the challenges facing it”.

Once again, this is a matter of responsibility, as frequently stressed by Sepi in his speeches to the Committee on the challenges of the crisis and on European economic recovery.

The push for social action: social rights and access to the labour market, the integration of minorities and migrants, inter-cultural dialogue and non-discrimination

On 30 November 2009, EESC president Mario Sepi, and Jacques Delors in his capacity as founding president of *Notre Europe*, adopted the following Declaration, on behalf of the EESC, to mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights:

"In order to control globalisation better; In order that the citizens of the European Union may regain confidence in the European project; In order to learn the lessons of the current financial, economic and social crisis; We ask the European Commission to propose a Social Action Programme which guarantees that fundamental social rights are treated on an equal footing with the rules on competition and economic freedoms. We ask the European Parliament and the Council to adopt this Social Action Programme. Civil society at local, regional, national and European level is asked to sign this declaration."



In this declaration, Sepi summarises and confirms the Committee's renewed political commitment vis-à-vis the urgency and the all too obvious need to set Europe back on the path of social action, an emphasised and concrete affirmation of rights, welfare and social inclusion policies to counter xenophobic tendencies that are resurfacing, especially in some European countries, partly as a result of the economic crisis.

One of the major outcomes of the Committee's efforts in this area was the establishment of the European Integration Forum in April 2009, in cooperation with the European Commission. This forum brings together the representatives of organisations working towards migrant integration.

Immigration, strongly emphasised by Sepi on this occasion, was one of the key concerns of his term of office.

The emphasis on the economic and social impacts of migration policies, an issue often raised in dialogue with the other institutions, emerges clearly in Sepi's statement to the forum's first meeting, held jointly with Jacques Barrot, Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security at that time.

Sepi stressed that *"Immigration is one of the most important social and economic issues of our time ..."* pointing out that *"active co-operation with civil society and the social partners is a key aspect of promoting European integration policies. There is a special need to emphasise the importance of the role played by the social partners, human rights organisations, immigrants' organisations, cultural and sports associations, faith communities, neighbourhood associations, educational communities, schools and universities, the media, etc in integration processes at the national, regional and local levels, and hence, a need to promote the development, consolidation and recognition of these organisations at European level ..."*

To this end, the Forum is also intended to spur European civil society and national immigrant organisations to join together and form groupings to achieve much-needed representation at European level, especially since the Lisbon Treaty will soon give integration policies a sound European legal basis. Therefore, when it comes to Community integration policies, while we are, of course, aware of the need to respect the subsidiarity principle and realise that integration is primarily a local process, we believe it is essential for European civil society to get across a strong, consistent and structured message.

We would like our interest and zeal in respect of the hugely important issue of integration to take a more practical, tangible form, provided, of course, that our institutional partners agree. The EESC offers its services as the present and future home of this Forum to host its meeting."



Sepi also gave considerable attention to ethnic minorities, with particular emphasis on the situation of the Roma in Europe in the light of serious acts of discrimination against this community in a number of European countries in recent years. In order to send out a message and

highlight concrete examples and situations where civil society can contribute to Roma integration, Mario Sepi prompted a number of one-off discussions, in addition to the EESC opinions adopted on this issue.

In particular, he took part in the *Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* pilgrimage in France and promoted a conference on *"Integrating the Roma into the economic and social fabric"*, held jointly by the EESC, local civil society and the Camargue Roma community, in Fourques, in May 2009.

This was followed by a significant European event held by the EESC in Brussels, which Sepi decided to set up in June 2009, shortly after the initiative held in France. In addition to representatives from European institutions and

organisations working in this field, the event was also attended by some of the local representatives who had shared their experiences at, and taken part in, the Fourques initiative.



These two meetings established the EESC, under the direction of its president, as a mouthpiece for a genuine two-way exchange and an opportunity for direct communication first by “going local” in France, where the problems and difficulties of the Roma community are deeply felt and then by extending the discussion to all EU countries through a European debate held at its headquarters.

These initiatives received broad local and European press coverage.

As stated in an article in La Marseillaise of 11 May 2009, “the president of an EU institution has for the first time honoured the famous Roma pilgrimage of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer with his presence” and, as reported by the Midi Libre of Nîmes on 26 May 2009 in an article entitled “The Roma, a European community, too”, “EESC president Mario Sepi has made multiculturalism a central priority of his term of office”.

These actions complemented the many occasions when the president took a political stance on the complex and much-debated issue of asylum policy, especially with reference to incidents involving the *refoulement* of asylum seekers and political refugees, not to mention discrimination against foreign workers.

In both these situations, EESC president Mario Sepi systematically reiterated the need for an EU-level policy for dialogue and cultural and social integration, ahead of economic integration, the recognition of rights and the need for stronger European coordination on asylum and irregular migration with a view to reaffirming human rights in full compliance with international law. It is worth noting, among the president's statements on these issues, his total opposition to “the EU or the Member States entering into repatriation or border control agreements with countries which have not signed the main international legal instruments on asylum rights” and his call for “the other EU institutions to launch the Common European Asylum System as soon as possible. This system would enable us to address these problems in full compliance with human rights and international conventions, as well as with greater solidarity between Member States, so that the States that are most exposed to migration are not left to deal with the problem single-handed.”

Action in the international sphere and the impact of cooperation with civil society in non-EU countries: *the case of Tibet*

An attempt to single out one of the more representative and significant external initiatives to exemplify President Sepi's hope and aim to make a real political and media impact through external cooperation activities with third-country civil society representatives brings the example of China and the mission to Tibet to the fore as probably the most symbolic. This mission took place in September 2009.

An EESC delegation led by its president carried out this mission between 11 and 15 September 2009, with the support of the European Commission, in the context of the EU-China Civil Society Round Table and following an invitation from the Economic and Social Council of China to Mr Sepi to visit Lhasa on a fact-finding mission on the economic and social challenges facing Tibetan society.

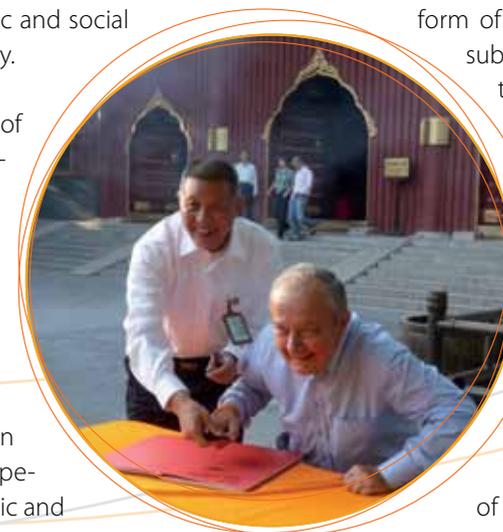
The importance and sensitivity of the mission, the first by an EU institution following the 2008 unrest in the Tibetan capital, generated widespread interest and strong media attention in China, Europe and the international press.

The purpose of the visit, within the context of the role and competencies of the European Economic and

Social Committee, was to find out more about social and economic conditions in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in order to develop possible areas of cooperation between our civil societies, and to deepen the activities of the EU-China Round Table.

The main conclusions drawn from the mission by the EESC president and brought to the attention of the other EU institutions and the media, included a number of vital points that have fuelled discussions with a view to suggesting ideas and future development cooperation projects in the Asian region. The picture that emerged was that of a Tibet characterised by a high level of investment by the central government mainly in the form of infrastructure and subsidies.

However, this was set against a background of considerable suffering owing to the heavy dependence on government funds for the region's development, as well as to the absence of a proper long-term



development model aimed at building Tibet's economic autonomy.

There are significant differences between urban and rural areas. This could give rise to tensions between the Han Chinese, who tend to be more present in the more developed urban areas, and the Tibetans, who predominate in the poorer parts of the region.



The EESC's visit enabled the European delegation, on more than one occasion during the mission, to emphasise strongly its concerns regarding the level of Tibetan participation in the economic development of the region.

During his many meetings with government representatives and the representatives of local and international civil society in Lhasa and Beijing, EESC president Sepi forcefully argued that China, as a key global player, should take greater responsibility regarding the openness of its culture and values, and that it was vital for the genuine and comprehensive development of Tibet to invest seriously in human capital and in the greater involvement of Tibetans in society.

The importance of direct information and seeing things first-hand, coupled with human exchange and direct contact with the local population as well as organisations, has enriched not only bilateral relations between Chinese and European civil societies but also an awareness of circumstances which can only be understood through an information-gathering approach that is entirely free of pre-conceived prejudice. The EESC president also met a delegation from the Tibetan parliament in exile and the EESC delegation visited Tibetans in exile in Dharamsala, in order to get a complete picture of the situation.

Furthermore, the mission was part of a consistent action plan, inspired by Sepi, which aimed at analysing the scope for improving prospects for human and socio-economic development, but which was also linked to concerns regarding the protection of fundamental rights in a context as difficult and as complex as that of the Tibetan region.

Naturally, the president's attention to international relations has also been drawn to other geographical areas, including Brazil and Russia or emerging civil society structures in Africa and the Mediterranean. The situation in Palestine has been a significant concern in meetings with Palestinian and Israeli counterparts, as well as in declarations that stressed respect for rights and the serious conditions experienced by civil society in those territories.

The EESC 2010 Biennial Conference: "Education to Combat Social Exclusion" - a synthesis of the president's slogan and first example of participatory democracy following the Lisbon Treaty's entry into force

In line with the president's programme and in order to undertake a significant institutional initiative that would enable the EESC to relay concrete recommendations and help the EU institutions to develop appropriate responses to the expectations of EU citizens, Sepi decided to dedicate the 2010 biennial conference (Florence, 20-22 May) to education, as a key instrument for combating social exclusion in all its forms.



Education, knowledge and understanding, key factors for sustainable social inclusion, were the focus of the biggest event of the two-year term of office, which symbolically combined a particularly apt location for discussing these issues, i.e. the *Istituto degli Innocenti* in Florence (with its long tradition in promoting childhood and social integration) with the purpose of summarising the concerns underlying the president's slogan "*Rights and solidarity to guide globalisation*".

Moreover, the breadth of civic participation and the involvement of broad sectors of civil society made it a genuine exercise in participatory democracy, based on the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. This was achieved through the targeted selection of small, medium-sized and large organisations from various European regions, committed in various ways to fighting poverty and social exclusion through education and training.

Analysis was based on a study of the most recent Eurostat data available and a crucial premise, i.e. social exclusion affects more than a quarter of Europeans and is caused by a range of situations including poverty, disability, belonging to an ethnic minority, difficulties in integrating culturally, and job insecurity. The conference's work and discussions explored the links between education (in all its forms and processes) and social exclusion in order to further develop the many areas and aspects of public action in education where civil society is particularly active.

As explicitly emphasised by Mr Sepi, the Florence conference was born of a precise objective: to forcefully advocate an investment plan for education so as to launch a genuinely common European policy for combating social exclusion.

This recommendation was forcefully argued during the course of the biennial conference's work. In particular, the conference stressed the need throughout to aim for new European legislation on inclusion, built on education, as a basic tool. The conference also suggested to Commission President, Mr Barroso, who attended the closing session that a Green Paper should be drafted on the issue.

In his final declaration, the president reiterated the EESC's view that this Green Paper was the ideal instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 flagship initiative to set up a European platform against poverty. A Green Paper could open the way to programmes for encouraging social innovation and developing innovative solutions in the area of education, training, employment, anti-discrimination action and migrant integration.

The biennial conference in Florence, which was the key European-scale initiative held in connection with the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, took place at a time of economic and social crisis, which has placed at even greater risk the already high number of European citizens (approximately 80 million) living below the poverty line. It drew considerable attention from the institutions, civil society and the media to the fact that education should act as a sort of "social elevator" by creating new opportunities for the more disadvantaged sections of the population. At the same time, it starkly revealed that education must have the qualitative capacity to eradicate discrimination and stereotypes.



The EESC's proposals were also consistent with the conclusions of the EU Education, Youth and Culture Council, held on 10-11 May 2010, in that they stressed the crucial need for high employment and strengthened social cohesion in order to enable Europe to develop a knowledge-based economy.

The above-mentioned findings were the outcome of three days of intensive discussions spanning two institutional plenaries and three thematic workshops attended by civil society representatives operating in a range of social areas. During the course of the three days, civil society representatives finally emerged with a clear perception that they had participated in an open and genuinely public event specifically dedicated to the world of those who were experiencing exclusion at first hand, and who were fighting it, and where even organisations that often had scant opportunity to voice their needs and experiences were given the opportunity to do so.

European Commission President Barroso, addressing the Florence conference, sent out very specific messages on this issue, stating that: "It is strange that some Member States do not seem to think that the fight against poverty is an EU competence, as the Lisbon Treaty defines it as an area where competence is shared between the Union and the Member States" and emphasising that the European Commission respected national education systems but that it was unthinkable to exclude education from the 2020 strategy for social inclusion.

For further information on the EESC 2010 Biennial Conference:
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.biennial-conference-2010>

EDUCATION TO COMBAT SOCIAL EXCLUSION



BIENNALE FIRENZE
20 > 22 MAY 2010

The importance of institutional and political communication

Throughout his term, Mr Sepi has made communication a strategic priority. First of all, he translated this vision into fact by appointing a spokesperson responsible for his communication strategy and, throughout the two-year period, he has made communication and political content the watchwords of his presidency.

The input required by this approach embraced much of the Committee's work: the tendency to address the need for visibility and a direct message to accompany the EESC's policy guidelines and action became increasingly structured.

First of all, opinions were grouped under selected thematic debates for the purposes of adoption and discussion in plenary. Cultural events were then defined and organised periodically on the basis of the current political and institutional situation and geared to the European and international media in order to develop day-to-day contact and direct relations with the European, national and sectoral press.

Numerous press conferences and meetings with journalists were held on the institution's key political messages. As a result, these events were always targeted, well-selected and dictated by the "news" that needed to be communicated, and not a mere consequence of disseminating the institution's routine activities.

Events of major media relevance were therefore held to coincide with specific decisions adopted by the Committee, political positions adopted by the President, opinions of particular political/institutional relevance, results in terms of recognition by the other institutions and proposals of EU relevance with specific reference to the real ongoing debate involving civil society in Europe. An notable example to remember was the attention given to

the EESC's 2009 civil society prize, which went to *Libera* and *Confindustria Sicilia* for their hard and unwavering fight against the mafia.

Furthermore, synergies with the other institutions, also in terms of support for the priorities of the Commission and the European Parliament, could be seen in the timeliness and consistency of

the president's communication activities. On many topics, the Committee has been ahead of the game in its responses and subject matter, including the debate on participation in the European elections in 2009, the impact assessment of EU social legislation, the analysis of the Lisbon Treaty's impact on civil society, the proposals for redefining the Lisbon strategy which resulted in the new Euro-



pe 2020 strategy and, naturally, the set of priorities promoted by the president in the above-mentioned areas, in line with his "rights and solidarity" slogan.

In addition, more targeted and specific discussions have often been linked with the themes of the three "European years" spanned by Sepi's term of office, namely the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008); the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009), and the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010). The fundamental issues raised by the latter of these years was highlighted and given the utmost attention by the biennial conference.

The president's website and blog, not to mention his political/institutional declarations aimed at the media, European interlocutors, civil society organisations, and EU and non-EU national economic and social councils have all ensured that the link between institutional language and public opinion is systematically considered as the key criteria for assessing the president's activities and the choice of message to be conveyed, in addition to the objectives to be met.

An analysis of the several hundred high quality articles, interviews and editorials, and coverage by the European press and the media in Italy and some other EU countries of the president's activities and opinions, and the positions adopted



by the Committee over the last two years, with particular reference to the economic crisis, input regarding the social sector, and institutional issues provides a clear picture of the situation and the EESC's raised profile and media coverage during Sepi's term of office.

During the last two years, the impetus given by EESC vice-president Irini Pari, who spearheaded many of the EESC's initiatives and innovations in this area with great enthusiasm and commitment, also played a fundamental role in strengthening communication.

Moreover, the cooperation and team spirit demonstrated throughout the president's term by the two vice-presidents, namely Irini Pari (Group I, employers) and Seppo Kallio (Group III, various interests) made it possible at all times to implement objectives and strategies together in a cooperative manner.

Good collaboration between the president's private office and the Committee's administrative services also contributed significantly, especially in the area of communication.

Access articles on Mario Sepi's term of office:
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.mario-sepi-articles>

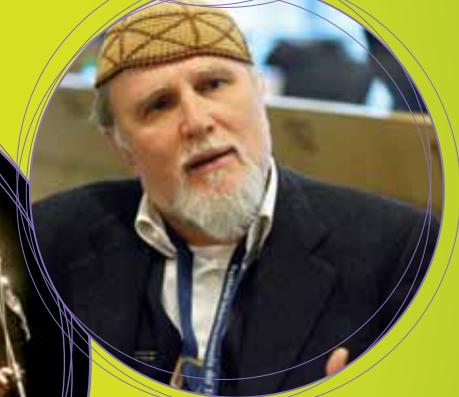
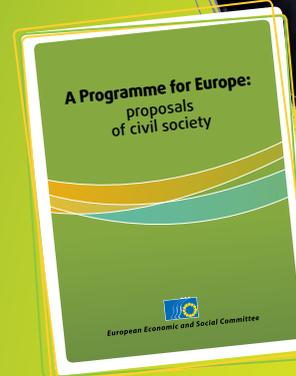
Conclusions

At the close of his term of office, Sepi believes that the Committee should develop a clear policy of continuity, building on earlier successful choices. In particular, the Committee's attention to key economic and social issues, especially in the light of the new context created by the Europe 2020 strategy, has proven productive and significant not only for the Committee's image but also as a result of its recommendations to its interlocutors. Meanwhile, the EESC should keep up its high level of commitment to the rights and circumstances of the most vulnerable, one of civil society's main concerns. Rights are becoming an increasingly central problem in Europe and the rest of the world, as also reflected by the entry into force of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. On the other hand, the Committee should play a key role in putting participatory democracy into practice, as advocated by the Lisbon Treaty. Article 11 of the Treaty, as Mr Sepi has pointed out in various recent documents, is a great opportunity for Europe and the Committee has considerable responsibilities towards its fulfilment, since it also has the appropriate political and administrative structures to undertake strategic decisions and concrete actions which would secure continuity in the choices made.

With regard to participatory democracy, under Mr Sepi's direction, the Committee has already developed productive and structured cooperation with the European Parliament on these issues. This began with bilateral meetings between the president and two EP vice-presidents, Libor Rouček and Isabelle Durant, which set the foundations for structured relations between the two institutions, including the organisation of the next Citizens' Agora, to be held in November 2010 on poverty.

Moreover, the Committee has participated in the meetings of the EP task force responsible for defining and organising this initiative.

As Commission President Barroso pointed out in a recent letter to Mr Sepi, dated 1 July 2010, "... the social partners represented within the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) have a key role to play in the practical implementation of the structural reforms to be carried out as part of Europe 2020 ... I therefore call upon the EESC not only to continue playing the active role that it took during the Lisbon Strategy, with the observatory that it set up, but to go further still. To succeed, we need a convergence of views and the active support of the social partners at European level and in the Member States..... I hope that the EESC will be able to create this consensus and provide the strong support that the Europe 2020 strategy needs...".





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In 2009, the EESC was awarded the prestigious «Ecodynamic Enterprise» label by the Brussels Institute for Management of the Environment (IBGE), obtaining 3 stars, the highest level possible. This label rewards organisations for good environmental performance.

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