

**SUIVI ACCORDÉ PAR LA COMMISSION AUX AVIS DU**

**COMITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL EUROPÉEN**

**RENDUS AU COURS DES SESSIONS PLENIERES D'AVRIL ET MAI 2015**

N°	Titre	Références	Mois plénière
<b>SG</b>			
1.  DG CNECT associé	<b>Autorégulation et corégulation dans le cadre législatif de l'Union européenne</b>  Rapporteur: M. Jorge PEGADO LIZ (GRIII-PT)	EESC-2014-04850-AS-TRA  INT/754  avis d'initiative	avril
<b>DG GROW</b>			
2.	<b>Une politique industrielle pour le secteur du verre européen</b>  Rapporteur: M. Josef ZBOŘIL (GRI-CZ)  Corapporteur: M. Enrico GIBELLIERI (Cat. 2-IT)	EESC-2014-04990-AS-TRA  CCMI/127  avis d'initiative	avril
3.	<b>Une politique industrielle en faveur du secteur des aliments et des boissons</b>  Rapporteur: M. Ludvík JÍROVEC (GRIII-CZ)  Corapporteur: M. Edwin CALLEJA (Cat. 1-MT)	EESC-2014-05388-AS-TRA  CCMI/129  avis d'initiative	mai
<b>DG REGIO</b>			
4.	<b>Programme urbain de l'UE</b>  Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - La dimension urbaine des politiques de l'UE: caractéristiques essentielles d'une politique urbaine de l'UE  Rapporteur: M. Etele BARÁTH (GRIII-HU)	COM(2014) 490 final  EESC-2014-05226-AS-TRA  ECO/369	avril

<b>DG ENER</b>			
5.  DG CLIMA co-lead	<p><b>Développement du système de gouvernance proposé au titre du cadre pour le climat et l'énergie à l'horizon 2030</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Richard ADAMS (GRIII-UK)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M<sup>me</sup> Ulla SIRKEINEN (GRI-FI)</p>	<p>EESC-2015-00105-AS-TRA</p> <p>TEN/562</p> <p>avis exploratoire demandé par la Commission</p>	avril
<b>DG SANTE</b>			
6.  DGs RTD et GROW associés	<p><b>Promotion d'un marché unique européen associant génie biomédical et industrie des services médicaux et de soins</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Edgardo Maria IOZIA (GRII-IT)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Dirk JARRÉ (Cat. 3-DE)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-04419-AS-TRA</p> <p>CCMI/128</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	avril
<b>DG MOVE</b>			
7.	<p><b>Feuille de route pour un espace européen unique des transports - Progrès et défis</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Raymond HENCKS (GRII-LU)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. Stefan BACK (GRI-SE)</p>	<p>EESC-2015-00399-AS-EDI</p> <p>TEN/566</p> <p>avis exploratoire à la demande du Parlement européen</p>	avril
<b>DG CLIMA</b>			
8.  DG ENER co-lead	<p><b>Incidences de la politique en matière de climat et d'énergie sur les secteurs agricole et forestier</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Mindaugas MACIULEVIČIUS (GRIII-LT)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-06932-AS-TRA</p> <p>NAT/655</p> <p>avis exploratoire sur la communication COM(2014) 15, demandé par la présidence lettone</p>	avril

<b>DG NEAR</b>			
9.	<b>Le rôle de la société civile dans les relations UE-Albanie</b>  Rapporteur: M. Ionuț SIBIAN (GRIII-RO)	EESC-2014-06949-AS-TRA  REX/420  avis exploratoire demandé par la Commission	avril
<b>DG ENV</b>			
10.	<b>Commerce des produits dérivés du phoque</b>  Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (CE) n° 1007/2009 sur le commerce des produits dérivés du phoque  Rapporteur: M. Thomas McDONOGH (GRI-IE)	COM(2015) 45 final – 2015/0028 COD  EESC-2015-01407-AS-TRA  NAT/666	mai
DG TRADE co-lead			
<b>DG TRADE</b>			
11.	<b>La protection des investisseurs et le règlement des différends entre investisseurs et États dans les accords de commerce et d'investissement de l'UE avec des pays tiers</b>  Rapporteur: M. Sandy BOYLE (GRII-UK)	EESC-2014-05356-AS-TRA  REX/411  avis d'initiative	mai
DG FISMA associé			
<b>DG ECFIN</b>			
12.	<b>Achever l'UEM: le pilier politique</b>  Rapporteur: M. Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT)  Rapporteur: M. Joost VAN IERSEL (GRI-NL)	EESC-2015-00551-AS-TRA  ECO/376  avis d'initiative	mai

<b>DG TAXUD</b>			
13.	<p><b>Paquet «Transparence fiscale»</b></p> <p>Proposition de directive du Conseil abrogeant la directive 2003/48/CE du Conseil</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>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur la transparence fiscale pour lutter contre la fraude et l'évasion fiscales</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Petru Sorin DANDEA (GRII-RO)</p>	<p>COM(2015) 129 final - 2015/0065 CNS</p> <p>COM(2015) 135 final - 2015/0068 CNS</p> <p>COM(2015) 136 final EESC-2015-01828-PAC-TRA</p> <p>ECO/381</p>	mai
<b>DG EMPL</b>			
14.	<p><b>Aide sociale à long terme et désinstitutionnalisation</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M<sup>me</sup> Gunta ANČA (GRIII-LV)</p> <p>Corapporteur: M. José Isaías RODRÍGUEZ GARCÍA-CARO (GRI-ES)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-07336-AS-TRA</p> <p>SOC/517</p> <p>avis exploratoire demandé par la présidence lettone</p>	mai
15.	<p><b>Stimuler la créativité, l'esprit d'entreprise et la mobilité dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation</b></p> <p>Rapporteur: M<sup>me</sup> Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GRI-CZ)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-06567-AS-TRA</p> <p>SOC/518</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	mai

16.	<b>Lignes directrices pour l'emploi</b>  Proposition de décision du Conseil relative aux lignes directrices pour les politiques de l'emploi des États membres  Rapporteur: M. Carlos Manuel TRINDADE (GRII-PT)  Corapporteur: M <sup>me</sup> Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GRI-CZ)	COM(2015) 98 final - 2015/0051 NLE  EESC-2015-01167- AS-TRA  SOC/519	mai
<b>DG RTD</b>			
DG GROW associé	17. <b>Vivre demain. L'impression 3D, un outil pour renforcer l'économie européenne</b>  Rapporteur: M. Dumitru FORNEA (GRII-RO)  Corapporteur: M <sup>me</sup> Hilde VAN LAERE (Cat. 1-BE)	EESC-2014-04420- AS-TRA  CCMI/131  avis d'initiative	mai

<p><b>N°1 Self-regulation and co-regulation in the Community legislative framework (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/4850 – INT/754</b>  <b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Jorge PEGADO LIZ (GRIII-PT)</b>  <b>SG – First Vice-President TIMMERMANS</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>As this is an own-initiative opinion, it does not relate to any Commission proposal. It puts forward a policy line on self- and co-regulation and calls for the Commission to take it into account in the revised interinstitutional agreement on better law-making.</p>	<p>The College has adopted a Better Regulation Agenda on 19 May 2015 (which comprised a proposal for a new interinstitutional agreement on better regulation) and on which the opinion of the Committee has been requested.</p>

<p><b>N°2      An industrial policy for the European glass sector (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/4990 – CCMI/127</b>  <b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Josef ZBOŘIL (GRI-CZ)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Mr. Enrico GIBELLIERI (GRII-IT)</b>  <b>DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</b></p>	
<b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>1.1 The economic downturn has had a serious impact on the glass industry and resulted in the reduction of capacity and production and significant job losses. In order to safeguard jobs and establish a proper investment climate for Europe’s glass industry to stay at the forefront of innovation, it is essential to address these major challenges through a European industrial policy for the glass industry. This policy must seek balance between the three pillars of sustainability: the economic, the social and the environmental.</p>	<p>European industrial competitiveness is at the heart of the Commission’s agenda. President Juncker made this clear when he stated in 2014 that the Internal Market had to build on a solid industrial base.</p> <p>The action of the European Commission is based on the EU’s competences in the field of industrial policy (article 173) where the Union is entitled to take action to support and supplement the actions of Member States. In industrial policy, the Union and the Member States work together to ensure that the conditions necessary for the competitiveness of the Union’s industry exist. In this time of crisis we must all do our part, and with the Missions for Growth we wish to make a concrete contribution to this common objective.</p>
<p>1.2 The EU must use all the tools at its disposal to revitalise demand and tap into the potential of glass products for supporting the transition to a low-carbon, energy-efficient and circular economy, thus generating substantial business and employment opportunities. Targeted initiatives - such as targets and robust measures to reduce energy consumption in buildings as well as the rapid</p>	<p>The European Commission is fully committed to mainstreaming competitiveness across the different regulatory areas, including energy and climate, which are vital for such an energy intensive sector.</p> <p>Our approach is based on better integration of the industrial competitiveness objective</p>



<p>development of an EU energy window labelling, support to R&amp;D, improved glass collection and recycling, and a policy-based return to economic growth in key sectors (e.g. building, automotive and renewables), must take place.</p>	<p>into other EU policies. Mainstreaming industrial competitiveness relies on horizontal policy action that is based on a holistic policy approach. The Commission has incorporated a strong industrial dimension in all major initiatives being launched in its first year in office. This includes the Investment Plan for Europe, the Internal Market Strategy, the Digital Single Market, the Energy Union, the Circular Economy and the Capital Markets Union as well as trade policy.</p> <p>The main focus to be given to the following areas is: 1) Future growth of industry will be driven by industry-related services; 2) Modernisation of EU industries by promoting innovation and maintaining a leadership in low-emission, resource and energy-efficient technologies. Digitalisation will also be essential to improve industrial competitiveness; 3) Better regulation will help create a favourable environment for entrepreneurs. In addition, access to finance – in particular for SMEs, developing global value chains and better integration of the industrial competitiveness objectives into other EU policies remain key challenges within the Commission agenda.</p>
<p>1.3 An industrial policy for the European glass sector must reinforce the competitiveness of the European-based manufacturers: by ensuring a level playing field with competitors from outside Europe with regards to the cumulative costs generated by implementing Europe’s</p>	<p>The European Glass industry faces various challenges having an impact on its competitiveness, such as the cost and availability of inputs (raw materials or energy), environmental, health and safety regulations as well as competition from</p>

environmental legislation; by providing better regulation and a predictable regulatory environment; by addressing the high cost of energy in the upcoming Energy Union. In this respect, impacts on SMEs require particular attention and adequate support must be provided when necessary. The upcoming assessment of cumulative cost impact on the sector, which will be undertaken by the European Commission, should serve as a basis for implementing the "better regulation" agenda advocated by the Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker.

third country producers.

The European Commission has just launched a Call for tenders<sup>1</sup> for a Cumulative Costs Assessment of the European Ceramics and Glass industries.

The Cumulative Costs Assessment for the glass and ceramics industry has been foreseen in Annex III – Refit actions to the Commission Work Programme 2015 Communication<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the Industrial Policy Communication published on 22 January 2014<sup>3</sup> announced that cumulative costs assessments will be launched to estimate ex-post the joint costs of regulation on specific industrial sectors and to provide input for the review of their competitiveness.

The focus should be first put on the direct, indirect and enforcement costs<sup>4</sup> of EU legislation applicable to companies operating in the EU, and their repartition across the main regulatory areas, such as energy, environment, trade, etc. As the ceramics and glass sectors are exposed to international competition to different degrees depending on sub-sectors, with access to, and price of, feedstock and energy being a key competitiveness factor, another important element is a preliminary comparison of the most important cost

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<sup>1</sup> [457/PP/GRO/SME/15/F/S123.- Study — cumulative costs assessment \(CCA\) of the EU ceramics and glass industries.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Annex III REFIT-actions to the Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, "Commission Work Programme 2015 / A New Start", COM(2014) 910final. 16/12/2014.

<sup>3</sup> Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "For a European Industrial Renaissance", COM(2014) 14/2.

<sup>4</sup> As per costs categorization in CEPS – Study "Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Regulation", 10.12.2013.

	<p>categories with the costs borne by international competitors.</p> <p>As production of ceramics and glass is mostly capital intensive, investment decisions are taken over the long term, therefore the costs will be analysed over time (indicatively 2005 - 2014, depending on the data availability).</p>
<p>1.4 Some sectors of Europe's glass industries suffer from unfair trade practices and must be protected against them. It is imperative for the EU to act more rapidly with effective trade measures when fair competition is endangered. In addition, careful assessment of the effects of new or future trade agreements on EU-based glass industries should be carried out.</p> <p>4.4 Europe's glass industries should be protected against unfair trade practices. Both the continuous glass fibre sector, and the flat and specialty glass sector suffer from unfair trade practices from Chinese competitors, and the European Commission needs to remain vigilant as regards the circumvention of duties. Generally speaking, it is imperative for the EU to act more rapidly with effective trade measures when fair competition is endangered. In addition, careful assessments of the effects of new or future trade agreements on EU-based glass industries should be carried out.</p>	<p>As a result of close cooperation with the glass industry, definitive anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures have been adopted against China for solar panels and glass fibres.</p>
<p>1.5 A policy is needed to articulate education and training systems better with labour market requirements. Vocational training may help during the transition but the European glass industry also needs to attract new talents and stay at the forefront of</p>	<p>As regards glass for buildings and within the scope of Construction 2020 "Sustainable Competitiveness of the Construction Sector", the Thematic Group 2 "Skills and Qualifications" aims at identifying measures to support capacity</p>

<p>innovation.</p>	<p>building and up-skilling of construction workers, including glass workers.</p>
<p>1.6 Coordination and harmonisation of European policies are essential (energy, climate, research, trade, environment, competition, employment, etc.). The involvement of social partners in general and the setting up of a European sectoral social dialogue, in particular, could form an industrial policy for the glass industry.</p>	<p>Please refer to Commission Position on 1.2</p>
<p>1.7 The revision of the EU ETS post-2020 must be based on robust evidence and take into account the sector's limited room for further reduction of its GHG emissions. Therefore, the glass industry needs to be fully protected against risks of carbon leakage beyond 2020 and until comparable GHG reduction efforts are undertaken in competitors' countries. The EU ETS must guarantee that glass installations receive the full amount of free allowances they need according to the benchmark and real production levels. Additionally, the reduction of allowances should not exceed the estimated potential for GHG reduction in the sector.</p>	<p>The proposal for a review of the Emissions Trading System (ETS) is included in the Commission's 2015 Work Programme.</p> <p>The Commission shares the aim of possible legal certainty and predictability for investments.</p> <p>The European Council Conclusions of October 2014 provided extremely important political guidance in view of the upcoming review (including carbon leakage provisions).</p> <p>Adequate support to industry can only be achieved by cost-efficient implementation of climate and energy policy proposals as well as by effective measures against carbon leakage.</p> <p>The Commission needs to ensure a thorough assessment of impacts - both by sector and economy-wide - and of the trade-offs which we will be faced with.</p>
<p>1.8 Although a successful circular economy model has been operating for the last 40 years in the glass packaging sector, a proactive policy is needed to recognise and sustain its efforts and generate success stories</p>	<p>Within its 2015 Work Programme, the Commission announced its intention to table an ambitious proposal on the Circular Economy by the end of 2015, ensuring EU leadership in eco-industries and eco-</p>

<p>in other subsectors. Recycling in the building glass sector, in particular, needs to be incentivised to enable local glass collection schemes to develop.</p>	<p>innovation.</p> <p>The expected output is a revised legislative proposal on waste, accompanied by an action plan on the circular economy.</p> <p>The circular economy represents a major economic opportunity in terms of ensuring the future of the manufacturing base in Europe and its economic performance, due to increased resource efficiency and reduced import dependency for primary raw materials. It is in line with current EU policy on raw materials, which aims at boosting resource efficiency and recycling as one of its three priority pillars. However, administrative burden must be minimised and market opportunities fully explored. The aim is to gather input from stakeholders on obstacles and market failures in their sector relating to circular economy.</p> <p>The circular economy and resource efficiency need to be in line with a growth-oriented EU Industry Policy (smart &amp; clean industry), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strong integration with EU Raw Materials Policy – in order to provide strategic access to raw materials, monitor flows, increase availability and remove barriers to access;</li> <li>- Internal Market – free circulation of secondary raw materials and products made from them, and of services related to the circular and demand side measures through public procurement;</li> <li>- new markets – enable new intermediaries and brokerage services and study legislative and other obstacles to the</li> </ul>
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	<p>circular economy, especially linked to chemicals legislation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- investment will also be an important factor for the take-up of the circular economy. Investment support could be channelled via in particular European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and Horizon 2020 (H2020).</li></ul>
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<p><b>N°3 An EU Industrial Policy for the Food and Drinks Sector (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/5388 - CCMI/129</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Ludvík JÍROVEC (GRIII-CZ))</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Mr Edwin CALLEJA (GRI-MT)</b>  <b>DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>The EESC strongly favours a sector-specific industrial policy for the European food and drinks industry tailored to its specific needs. It believes that this can be achieved through a renewed mandate of the High Level Forum for a better functioning supply chain for the period 2015-2019 whose mandate came to an end on 31 December 2014.</p>	<p>On 1 June 2015 the Commission adopted a Decision providing the High Level Forum for a better functioning food supply chain with a new mandate<sup>1</sup>. The Forum will be instrumental to the development of a solid industrial policy in the agro-food sector and of related policy measures contributing to a better functioning food supply chain.</p> <p>The Forum can serve as a place of discussion on all topics related to the competitiveness of the food sector, whenever relevant and appropriate.</p>
<p>The Commission should map and monitor progress regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the ongoing REFIT exercise led by the Commission. This should contribute to the completion of the Single Market for food without losing sight of existing standards in the conditions of employment of workers;</li> <li>- the recent CAP reform that needs to</li> </ul>	<p>The Commission is in charge of ensuring the effective implementation of EU law. Operators of the food sector can benefit from a high degree of harmonization in the field of EU law.</p> <p>On 2 October 2013, the Commission decided to carry out a Fitness Check of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 (General Food Law Regulation (GFL)) under the Regulatory</p>

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 179, 2.6.2015, p.3

<p>be implemented without creating distortions of competition among Member States and in a way that stimulates sustainable production;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the EU Apprentice Pledge.</li> </ul>	<p>Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT)<sup>1</sup>. The latter Fitness Check is a comprehensive policy evaluation assessing whether the legislative framework introduced by the GFL Regulation for the entire food and feed sector is 'fit for purpose' and whether it captures and reflects policy trends of today. This exercise will take into account previous evaluations already performed in the area of food and feed as well as the results of two external studies that have been commissioned by DG SANTE to support the Fitness check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- external study on the general part of GFL Regulation (Articles 1-21);</li> <li>- external study on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the management of emergencies/crises (Articles 50 to 57).</li> </ul> <p>The Fitness Check on the GFL Regulation is foreseen to be finalised by the first quarter of 2016.</p> <p>The recent CAP reform has stimulated sustainable production with the establishment of the new "greening payment" as well as many actions within the rural development policy. The new system of direct support acknowledges the wide diversity across the EU, but takes place within well-defined regulatory and budgetary limits in order to ensure common objectives through common instruments at European level, guarantee a level-playing</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Annex to Commission Communication “Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT): Results and next steps”, COM(2013)685.



	<p>field and avoid unfair competition"</p> <p>The EU social partners from the food and drink sector submitted a joint pledge on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in 2013, which focused on improving the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships. The Commission conducted a survey to monitor the follow-up of the pledges in 2015. Responding to the survey, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) and Food Drink Europe highlighted their joint project on "Bringing in new talents and managing an ageing workforce". As part of this project, they organised a consultation seminar to develop case studies with their affiliates. In addition, they participated in a European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) seminar on a European quality framework for apprenticeships and continue to share good practices on apprenticeships.</p>
<p>The Commission should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seek a favourable conclusion of significant EU trade deals still pending (notably USA, Japan and South Asian partners) as these can bring considerable advantages to EU food and drink producers;</li> <li>- monitor the implementation of trade agreements in force;</li> <li>- strive for a better coordination between bilateral and plurilateral agreements;</li> <li>- ensure reciprocity of treatment both in the lowering of tariff barriers and in the</li> </ul>	<p>The Commission is active in negotiating bilateral trade agreements with a long list of strategic partners in order to improve market access for food and drink products to non-EU markets. Negotiations address both tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade.</p> <p>The Commission is considering measures to increase SME Internationalisation to exploit the potential of the Internal Market and of third countries. As an example, the COSME programme includes actions to help SMEs to internationalise or provide access to finance to help SMEs develop their business. The Enterprise Europe Network (as major action in COSME) is increasing its reach to more than 600 partner organisations in 63</p>

<p>elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and ensure that existing EU standards of consumer, environment and health protection are maintained.</p> <p>The EU Commission should increase its support for SMEs to become more internationalised.</p>	<p>countries and plans to further develop specialised advisory services for the internationalisation of SMEs, including specific activities for SMEs in the agro-food sector.</p> <p>Please refer to <a href="http://een.ec.europa.eu">http://een.ec.europa.eu</a> for more information.</p>
<p>There is a crying need for the industry itself to improve its image especially with young people. The need to recruit a higher quality of human resources should be backed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more high quality sector-based labour market information available across Member States to help address the problem of asymmetric information between employers and potential employees; and to identify and correct any skills mismatches;</li> <li>- validation of the courses of study in higher education institutions on a regular basis with the inclusion of food and drinks industry representatives to maintain relevance of vocational education sector;</li> <li>- apprenticeship programmes to be opened to all new recruits to the food and drinks sector not exclusively to young people. This is especially important in unlocking the potential of women returners and older workers seeking to change career;</li> <li>- means and resources for training and life-long learning to have a qualified workforce. In this regards, social dialogue is a fundamental element.</li> </ul> <p>The EESC encourages the establishment of a food KIC (Knowledge and Innovation</p>	<p>The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will launch a call for Knowledge and Innovation Community in 2006 in the field of Food4Future – sustainable supply chain from resources to consumers. The KIC will bring together research, higher education and business players to boost the innovation of the EU and its Member States. Amongst its different activities, the KIC is planned to address the current shortage of skills and human resources in the sector. It will offer the opportunity to stimulate new educated entrepreneurial people, capable of developing new innovative technologies and business in the food sector.</p> <p>Via the Erasmus+ Programme, opportunities are offered to academic players and business to closely collaborate to address skills mismatches, support knowledge transfer, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship competences.</p> <p>The Commission agrees that the Single Market must be accompanied by a platform of minimum EU-wide social rights. It will continue to ensure the proper implementation of the EU legislation in that field. It is also engaged in pursuing a deeper and fairer Internal Market with a strengthened industrial base via the promotion of labour mobility, while</p>

<p>Community) in the food and drinks sector as it not only represents an essential commitment of increasing R&amp;D investment by 2020 but it also is a strong contributor for increasing jobs and growth.</p> <p>Finally, the EESC highlights the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the protection of European workers and consumers rights;</li> <li>- full and effective ratification, implementation and enforcement of ILO fundamental standards;</li> <li>- European quality standards in the food and drinks sector.</li> </ul>	<p>accepting the right of national authorities to fight abuse or fraudulent claims. It supports Member States' efforts in tackling better undeclared work with its proposal on an EU platform to enhance cooperation in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work.</p> <p>The Commission strongly supports the ratification and application both in the EU and in the world of International Labour Organization (ILO) fundamental rights conventions as well as other up-to-date ILO conventions such as on occupational health and safety at work, working conditions and labour inspection. The EU includes commitments on ILO conventions in its new generation of EU Free Trade Agreements.</p>
<p>The EESC calls on the Commission to adopt a Communication on "Sustainability of Food Systems".</p>	<p>The adoption of such a Communication is not foreseen by the current Work Programme of the Commission. However, the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental) are systematically taken into account by the Commission in the policy initiation phase, in particular in its impact assessments.</p>

<p>The EESC reiterates its opinion affirming the need for a definition, a common and globally aligned EU methodology to quantify food losses and food waste, including recycling and recovery of unsold food. However, it considers that steps need to be taken without waiting to see the results of EU and global research projects currently underway. Such steps include raising awareness on food wastage along the food chain and contribution to the development and dissemination of best practices.</p>	<p>The research project "FUSION" is developing tools to improve the quantification of flows of food coproducts and waste. The Commission has developed practical tips to be used in awareness campaigns on food waste. It is working with Member States and private stakeholders to identify and disseminate good practice, for instance in the field of food donation. It is currently considering taking further actions to improve the use of food resources, particularly in the context of the circular economy package that it intends to present later during 2015.</p>
<p>The EESC continues to promote cultural change in business relations in order to have fair trading practices along the agri-food chain as in its opinion on 9 May 2013 and therefore welcomes the efforts that have been undertaken by both distributors and food and drinks manufacturers for developing a voluntary initiative to promote fair business relations along the food supply chain (SCI - Supply Chain Initiative).</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the comments of the EESC in this respect. As a follow-up to the Communication adopted in July 2014 on unfair trading practice in the food supply chain, the Commission plans to adopt a report addressed to co-legislators in 2016. The Commission has also financed a study on the Monitoring of the implementation of the Principles of Good Practice which aims at assessing the effectiveness of the Supply Chain initiative and other similar voluntary platforms set up at national level. Results of the study will be available in 2016 and will feed the above-mentioned report for co-legislators.</p>

The food sector is facing key challenges with limited R&D funding. The EESC believes there is a need for R&D to be clearly targeted and for industry to be a key partner in identifying how this should be done. Moreover, to be successful and accepted, the EESC believes that innovation should be based in particular on consumer expectations.

The Horizon 2020's Societal Challenge 2 - Action on 'food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy' - aims to ensure the safe, healthy and affordable food supply that citizens (and the environment) require and to make food and feed processing, distribution and consumption more sustainable and the food sector as a whole more competitive. As an illustration, the 2014-2015 Work Programme published in December 2013 includes a thematic area ('resource-efficient, eco-innovative food production and processing') specifically designed for SMEs.

Other work will focus on:

- healthy diets and safe food for all;
- informed consumer choices;
- dietary solutions and innovations for improved health; and
- competitive food processing methods that use fewer resources and produce fewer by-products, waste and greenhouse gases.

<p>The EESC believes that special attention should be given to the specific needs of SMEs, in particular to reduce the administrative burden but calls for caution regarding exemptions especially those concerning food safety for SMEs since that could have a negative effect and drive them out of the market.</p>	<p>The Commission has integrated SMEs in its Better Regulation agenda. Competitiveness proofing and SME test must now be properly applied in the Commission's impact assessments. The Commission proposed new regulatory fitness and performance (REFIT) measures in order to ease the burden on enterprises and SMEs.</p> <p>The Commission does not intend to exempt micro-companies from EU legislation by default, but instead relies on the so-called 'reversed burden of proof' principle. It requires the Commission services to provide evidence in cases where regulating micro-enterprises is necessary. Food safety is among the areas where meeting policy objectives may require that micro-enterprises be included in the scope of new regulations. Exemptions should always be analysed on a case by case basis, supported by evidence and justified by needs.</p>
<p>The EESC urges the Commission to produce a report, evaluating whether to provide information on ingredients and nutritional content of alcoholic beverages.</p>	<p>Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers requests the Commission to adopt a report on the current exemptions for alcoholic beverages to provide the list of ingredient and the nutrition declaration. The Commission has initiated exploratory actions and led preliminary discussions with Member States, but further work remains to be done before the Commission can progress with this report and provide a date for its adoption.</p>

<p><b>N°4</b></p> <p><b>The Urban dimension of EU policies - key features of an EU Urban Agenda</b></p> <p><b>COM(2014) 490 final – EESC 2014/5226 - ECO/369</b></p> <p><b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Ms Etele BARÁTH (GRIII-HU)</b></p> <p><b>DG REGIO– Commissioner CREȚU</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>

<b>essential</b>	
<p>2.10. The EESC should therefore welcome, not least for the reasons outlined above, the European Commission initiative to draw up an urban agenda and support efforts to ensure that the establishment and development of the urban policy is based on broad consultation.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support of the EESC on the EU Urban Agenda. Since the 2014 Communication on “The Urban Dimension of EU policies - key features of an EU Urban Agenda”, significant progress has been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there has been a public consultation;</li> <li>- the Commission has drafted a Staff Working Document<sup>1</sup> which presents a set of actions at Commission level;</li> <li>- Member States have supported the work of the Commission on the EU Urban Agenda through the Riga Declaration adopted by Member States on 10 June 2015;</li> <li>- the URBACT III programme has been adopted<sup>2</sup> and the first call for proposals launched;</li> <li>- the Urban Innovative Actions are starting with a first call foreseen in November 2015;</li> <li>- discussion is ongoing with Member States on the EU Urban Agenda.</li> </ul>
<p>4.1.3. The "high-level" consultative body, which has members from all 28 Member States, and which was set up to strengthen the governance of the macro-regional strategies, could be the missing link, and oversee implementation of the proposed</p>	<p>This “high-level consultative body” is currently the Urban Development Group (UDG) set up by the Member States.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> SWD (2015) 109

<sup>2</sup> C (2014) 9857



<p>coordination policy.</p>	
<p>4.2.1. For the EESC, it is extremely important that the participation of civil society (i.e. the representatives of socio-economic interest groups and various interests) be an undisputed element of the EU's multi-level governance, and this should apply at all stages, from the decision-making process to monitoring implementation.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the position of the EESC that civil society should be involved in the preparation of the EU Urban Agenda. The Commission plans to involve the EESC and is ready to present its progress to the EESC.</p>
<p>4.3. In framing the urban programme, it is important to prioritise – given, in particular, the transformation of economic and financial governance into development policy – a small number of factors, so that a balance can be struck between diverging systems that are likely to constitute a basis for taking effective and efficient action.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view that it is important to focus on main issues and will continue to work along these lines.</p>

<p><b>N°5</b></p> <p><b>The development of the governance system proposed in the context of the 2030 climate and energy framework</b></p> <p><b>COM (2014)15 final - EESC-2015/0105 - TEN/562</b></p> <p><b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Mr Richard ADAMS (GRII-UK)</b></p> <p><b>Corapporteur: Ms Ulla SIRKEINEN (GRI-FI)</b></p> <p><b>DG ENER - Commissioner ARIAS CAÑETE</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>The EESC has stressed the need for the new governance structure to be developed taking into account the views of the European Parliament, Member States and stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Framework Strategy for the Energy Union (COM(2015) 80 final) proposes an integrated governance and monitoring process, to make sure that energy-related actions at European, regional, national and local level all contribute to the Energy Union's objectives. The proposed governance system has, <i>inter alia</i>, the specific objective to "<i>involve an energy dialogue with stakeholders to inform policy-making and support active engagement in managing the energy transition</i>".</p> <p>As part of this process, the Commission's Vice President Šefčovič has started a high-level Energy Union Tour, involving dedicated meetings with individual Member States, national parliaments and stakeholders. This process will support the preparation of the first State of the Energy Union Report, to be published by the end of 2015.</p>
<p>The EESC proposes the introduction of a structured stakeholder dialogue to be linked to the governance process: "The development of a reliable and transparent</p>	<p>As indicated in the Framework Strategy for the Energy Union (COM(2015) 80 final), the Commission will launch a dynamic governance process for the</p>

<p>delivery mechanism for the energy and climate objectives and the Energy Union should take place in parallel with a multi-level dialogue-based process centred around informing and involving all stakeholders."</p>	<p>European Energy Union. This process will involve an energy dialogue with stakeholders to inform policy-making and support active engagement in managing the energy transition.</p>
<p>The EESC suggests, for the implementation of the "European Energy Dialogue" (EED), to i) establish in each Member State national energy dialogues; ii) define, in consultation with the Commission, guidelines on establishing national energy dialogues; iii) create a fully independent coordinating EED structure to encourage action and implementation in each Member State; iv) provide an account of consultations within the EED, in the national plans.</p>	<p>A key objective of the integrated national energy and climate plans will be to ensure a holistic approach by Member States in defining energy and climate policies which will contribute to the Energy Union objectives. Moreover, the plans should ensure that the flexibility given to Member States to adapt policies to national circumstances is consistent with the attainment of agreed EU-objectives. When preparing their plans, Member States should involve a wide range of stakeholders as well as neighbouring Member States to ensure regional consultation.</p>
<p>The EESC notes that there is still no identification of a specific action point in relation to governance that would provide the necessary endorsement to build the supporting structures of the EED and urges that this be remedied by the Council and Parliament.</p>	<p>In line with the provisions included in the Framework Strategy for the Energy Union (COM(2015) 80 final) and the 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy in the period from 2020 to 2030 (COM(2014) 15 final), the Commission will come forward with guidance to Member States on integrated national energy and climate plans.</p>

<p><b>N°6 Promoting the European single market combining biomedical engineering with the medical and care services industry (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/4419 – CCMI/128</b>  <b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Edgardo Maria IOZIA (GR11-IT)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Mr Dirk JARRÉ (GR11-DE)</b>  <b>DG SANTE – Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS</b></p>	
<b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>1.3 Europe is facing a rising demand for quality, affordable, safe and permanently reliable health services at a time when public spending is under pressure. With an expanding elderly population and shrinking tax base, it is time for the European Union to rethink its healthcare systems to make them universally accessible, efficient and sustainable by providing sufficient resources.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the views expressed by the Committee. It would, however, underline that the healthcare systems should be accessible, sustainable and effective, in the sense that they should be capable of improving the health of the population.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>1.5 Access to health and care services is to be considered a fundamental right. The EESC underlines the importance of closely involving potential users of biomedical engineering products – in particular patients and their families, but also medical and care personnel – in decision-making processes to determine, together with biomedical engineering experts, the direction of biomedical engineering research and the subsequent design of products and services, so that they respond to real needs and preferences, can be easily</p>	<p>The Commission supports the views of the Committee on access being considered a fundamental right, as recognized by the Council in 2006.</p> <p>The Commission supports the Committee's view that there is an added value to promoting some action at EU level to support Member States in improving equity of access to healthcare.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Communication of the Commission On effective, accessible and resilient health systems COM(2014) 215 final [http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthcare/docs/com2014\\_215\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/healthcare/docs/com2014_215_final_en.pdf).

<p>managed, and thus better serve their purpose. Issues of accessibility, safety, possible dependency and data protection also need be taken into consideration.</p> <p>1.8 The EESC supports better deployment of "more Europe in health", with four essential strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- harmonisation of existing legislation;</li> <li>- implementation of existing legislation;</li> <li>- research, development and innovation activities;</li> <li>- access equality, with a special focus on vulnerable sections of society.</li> </ul> <p>1.9 The EESC advocates and recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fully ensuring healthcare and equal access to healthcare for all.</li> </ul>	
<p>1.13 The EESC refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- manufacturing and marketing of equipment (for prevention/diagnosis/treatment/rehabilitation), special materials, implantable devices, prostheses and robotic systems for biomedical applications;</li> <li>- the pharmaceuticals industry and the food industry, to analyse and quantify the interaction between medicines/substances and biological parameters.</li> </ul>	<p>The Commission invites the EESC to add/start with the term "development".</p> <p>The Commission invites the EESC to replace the term "drug" by "medicinal product".</p> <p>It should be noted that the primary industry requiring biomedical engineering specialists is the medical devices industry.</p>
<p>1.14 EESC indicates that “The European and national regulatory framework was unable to keep up with the fast pace of technology change in particular in additive manufacturing, which is why there is a twofold need for regulation”.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that it is necessary to adapt the existing regulatory framework for medical devices to scientific and technological progress in order to make it fit-for-purpose. This is why in September</p>

	<p>2012 the Commission adopted its proposals for a Regulation on medical devices and for a Regulation on <i>in vitro</i> diagnostic medical devices which are currently under examination by the co-legislators.</p>
<p>1.15 EESC indicates that “one major concern is that medical devices are considered industrial products and thus may receive certification from private entities. For this reason, a more specific and adequate guarantee of quality certification needs to be developed. The EESC supports the European Parliament resolution of 2 April 2014 on medical devices.”</p>	<p>The Commission proposals on medical devices (COM(2012) 541 final and COM(2012) 542 final) significantly reinforce the regulatory framework for medical devices <i>inter alia</i> by providing for stricter criteria for designation and monitoring of notified bodies and for more stringent control of high-risk medical devices and <i>in vitro</i> diagnostic medical devices.</p> <p>The Commission would like to emphasize that medical devices are regulated on the basis of the “new approach”.</p>
<p>1.18 A time frame of at least ten years is needed to realise a coherent healthcare programme striving towards efficient applications of novel technologies in healthcare. This is at odds with the European Commission terms of only five years, meaning that visions and strategies change continuously. A stable vision and fixed objectives are greatly needed as the cornerstone for efficient healthcare in the future. It is necessary to ensure healthcare for all and equal access to that care through product and service innovation, as well as a long-term perspective and consistent policies and strategies to realise the objectives.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee that realising a healthcare programme needs a longer timeframe. It would like to point out that its third Health Programme spans over seven years (2014-2020).</p>
<p>2.6 Good health is essential for well-being, economic prosperity and sustainable development. The health sector is driven by</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee's view on the importance of "good health" for the economy. It affects</p>

<p>scientific and technological progress, which affects employment, innovation, sustainable development and growth. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), health technology is important for increasing the quality of health and care services, including solving health problems and improving the quality of people's lives.</p>	<p>not only the productivity of the workforce but also life choices on education, investment and savings which are of great importance for economic performance.</p>
<p>2.7 Among the important challenges are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the focus on enhanced prevention and early diagnosis by using new technologies;</li> <li>- efficiency-based medicine not just evidence-based medicine (e.g. implementing new processes in healthcare via technology support such as tele-services);</li> <li>- proof of cost-efficiency, which is often very difficult because of the heterogeneous financing systems in the health-care domain in Europe;</li> <li>- multi-stakeholder situations and competing interests between different stakeholders;</li> <li>- depending on the medical device classification and invention, the fact that it can take up to 10 years from the idea stage to reimbursement;</li> <li>- facilitating the adoption of cost-effective measures, not least those based on emerging and possibly even remote technologies, by establishing appropriate reimbursement systems.</li> </ul>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee's view on the importance of focusing more on prevention and early diagnosis.</p> <p>The Commission invites the EESC to clarify what is an efficiency-based medicine. So far, medicines are authorized based on efficacy, safety and quality and a positive benefit-risk balance. It follows that there is no authorisation of products that fail to demonstrate a positive outcome in terms of efficacy, therefore the issue seems rather about cost-effectiveness.</p> <p>Additionally, the cost-effectiveness is considered by Member State authorities competent for reimbursement.</p>
<p>3.2 It is stated that “One of these measures that is particularly important is the involvement of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in medical device regulation, namely in the qualification and monitoring of notified bodies (NBs)”.</p>	<p>The Commission is of the opinion that it would be more appropriate to change “qualification” to “designation”.</p> <p>Moreover, the issue of possible involvement of EMA, which should</p>

	<p>only concern NBs responsible for high-risk devices, the so-called “special notified bodies” (SNBs), would need to be thoroughly analysed, as well as the resources and financing necessary.</p>
<p>3.4 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) applied to health and healthcare systems can increase their efficiency, improve quality of life and unlock innovation in health markets. The new eHealth Action Plan aims to address and remove existing barriers to the development of a fully mature and interoperable eHealth system in Europe, in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Digital Agenda for Europe. Article 14 of the Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, which establishes the eHealth network, represents a further step towards formal cooperation on eHealth between the Member States.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the Committee's view on the importance of the contribution of ICT for the efficiency of healthcare systems and for the improvement of the quality of life of the population.</p>
<p>3.7 Advanced medicine should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be smart everywhere, guaranteeing mobility even for people with serious diseases;</li> <li>- shift from re-active curing to preventive strategies;</li> <li>- change from blockbusters to personalised approaches;</li> <li>- increase patients' empowerment and participation;</li> <li>- improve mechanisms to protect data.</li> </ul>	<p>The Commission interprets that the word "should" in this context expresses probability and is not prescriptive. If this is the case, the Commission agrees with the Committee's opinion.</p>
<p>4.4 The EESC indicates that “in addition, legislation is envisaged covering the treatment of products made with 3D printers and defining the applications of these products in</p>	<p>The medical devices legislation provides requirements for the safety and performance of medical devices produced by means of 3-D printing but</p>



the medical field.”	does not cover their use in treatment or for specific applications in the medical field.
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<p><b>N°7 Roadmap to a single European transport area (exploratory opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2015/0399 – TEN/566</b>  <b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Raymond HENCKS (GRII-LU)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Mr Stefan BACK (GRI-SE)</b>  <b>DG MOVE – Commissioner BULC</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>Efficient implementation of the EFSI and earmarking of the funds transferred from CEF for transport, also in the field of training.</p>	<p>We need to view EFSI in a broader perspective as it would enable the EU to innovate and develop and create jobs. Transport investments have high growth potential and there should be a sufficient number of projects to benefit also from the EFSI. Earmarking of the funds would be against the overall purpose of the instrument.</p>
<p>Simpler and clearer charging concepts (...) adjust charges to guarantee cohesion, avoid social exclusion and ensure coherence with taxes and charges in general, preferential treatment of public transport.</p>	<p>The Commission intends to look more closely at the road charging system, in the context of the road package to be presented in 2016.</p>
<p>Supports the focus on social dumping, emphasises the importance of implementation and calls for social dialogue.</p>	<p>The Commission indeed puts a lot of emphasis on addressing the social issues in transport and will look for the right solutions to the outstanding problems through an extensive social dialogue.</p>
<p>Flexibility of the modal shift, criticism of the rigid approach to 300 kilometre limit especially with reference to remote and sparsely populated regions.</p>	<p>The overarching objective of the modal shift is to promote optimal use of various modes of transport. The goal of shifting freight over 300 km was intended to provide a measurable benchmark to assess progress at EU level towards the objectives laid down</p>

	<p>in the White Paper. It is by no means a rigid rule for modal shift.</p>
<p>Adequate infrastructure in remote regions.</p>	<p>The prioritisation of projects is inevitable considering the limited resources. The EU policies and programmes focus primarily on the core TEN-T network which is assessed to have the highest positive impacts on the entire EU. Nonetheless, the development of infrastructure in remote regions can also be supported by the Cohesion and European Regional Development Fund.</p>
<p>Doubling urban public transport use by 2030 through installations and infrastructure that facilitate mobility of pedestrians, cyclists and the elderly or persons with reduced mobility.</p>	<p>The Commission sees the importance of urban public transport but chooses its actions so as to bring added value. Local authorities are generally better positioned to deal with local issues and decide how to organise local transportation. The Commission provides a proper contribution by acting as a platform for coordination and exchange of best practices. The urban level may in some cases be important for the EU transport system, in which case Union legislative action may be appropriate, as highlighted by the TEN-T Regulation.</p>
<p>Importance of passenger rights, also in view of new concepts such as UBER.</p>	<p>To move forward the agenda on passenger rights, the proposals of the Commission need to be first adopted by the legislator. In the meantime, the Commission will look into of passenger rights in multimodal travel and investigate the functioning of the new innovative companies offering transport services.</p>

<p>Assessment of the Annex I in terms of their current feasibility.</p>	<p>The Commission intends to analyse the achievements of the strategy proposed in 2011 as a part of its stock taking exercise.</p>
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<p><b>N°8 Implications of climate and energy policy on agricultural and forestry sectors (exploratory opinion)</b>  <b>COM(2014) 15 final – EESC 2014/6932 – NAT/655</b>  <b>507th Plenary Session – April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Mindaugas MACIULEVIČIUS (GRIII-LT)</b>  <b>DG CLIMA – Commissioner ARIAS CAÑETE</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>EU policies must address the challenge of maintaining food security in spite of the growing demand, while maintaining the competitiveness of the EU's agricultural and forestry sectors [...]. The EU policy framework needs to be coherent and consistent [and] avoid relocation of energy- and emissions-intensive production capabilities to other parts of the world.</p>	<p>The Communication acknowledges the multiple objectives of these sectors such as the production of food, feed, raw materials and energy.</p> <p>The Commission also acknowledges the need for consistency between relevant EU policies (in particular as regards the EU's food security and climate change objectives) and the importance of preventing a mere displacement of emissions to production areas where less stringent sustainability standards would apply.</p>
<p>When deciding on the post-2020 GHG emission reduction targets for Member States in the agricultural and forestry sectors, the EESC calls for flexibility, especially in Member States which currently have significantly lower footprints in agriculture or forestry.</p>	<p>The Commission notes that the European Council of 23 October 2014 provided already detailed guidance on how to set the national reduction targets for the non-Emissions Trading System (ETS) sectors. The Commission is now in the process of further assessing this and has launched accordingly stakeholder consultations related to the Effort Sharing Decisions and the incorporation of agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) in the 2030 framework.</p>
<p>Active forest management and increased</p>	<p>The reporting of carbon storage in</p>

<p>use of wood products can increase the removal and storage of CO<sub>2</sub>. Additional substitution effects can be expected where wood products replace conventional products or materials.</p>	<p>Harvested Wood Product as part of forest management under LULUCF and its inclusion into the 2030 greenhouse gas mitigation framework imply that the climate benefits of material use of forest biomass would be accounted for, whereas substitution benefits are already accounted for in the industrial sectors (as a reduction in emissions due to the production of conventional products or materials substituted by wood).</p>
<p>Concentrating on 2020 and 2030 targets is too short a period for biological systems.</p>	<p>The main building blocks for the EU policy framework for 2020 are already in place. As our impact assessments have pointed out, our actions will impact on emissions in both LULUCF and Agriculture, also in 2020 and 2030. Therefore the Commission disagrees that the policy horizon is too short. Nevertheless, having a clear perspective on the longer term is important. It should be noted that the EU has started the preparation for its policies for the period after 2020 already in 2011 when looking exactly at the longer term in its 2050 Low Carbon Roadmap. Additionally, in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP21 in Paris, December 2015 policies up to 2030 are discussed. A legislative proposal would be made in the first half of 2016.</p>
<p>The EESC calls on the EU institutions and Member States to increase the funding for [research, innovation and development as main drivers for the transition to sustainable agriculture and forestry]</p>	<p>The Commission will consider integrating these priorities within the Horizon 2020 and Life+ programming.</p>

<p>EU policies, combined with financial incentives to farmers and forest owners, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promote the gradual transition to fossil fuel free agriculture models,</li> <li>- focus on improving the efficiency of all production systems, and</li> <li>- support a more efficient utilisation of resources, including land, water and nutrients.</li> </ul>	<p>These priorities are being pursued by existing and forthcoming legislation on climate change and the CAP.</p>
<p>The best examples of [civil dialogue and civil initiatives between stakeholders and local, regional, national and European institutions], including successful public-private partnerships, should be shared among the Member States.</p>	<p>It is expected that Member States will be involved in the Comitology for examining or advising on relevant legal acts. A number of coordination or consultative groups (such as the Standing Forest Committee, or the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork, and the Climate Change Committee sub-groups) are also informed and consulted.</p>

<p><b>N°9 The role of civil society in EU-Albania relations (exploratory opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/06949 - REX/420</b>  <b>507<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - April 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Ionuț SIBIAN (GRIII-RO)</b>  <b>DG NEAR - Commissioner HAHN</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>1.7 The EESC asks that the promotion of social dialogue be included among the key priorities of the EU institutions as regards Albania, and that it should therefore be reflected in all Commission programmes available to the country. This would require greater involvement of the National Labour Council (NLC), which should also be formally involved and consulted at each stage of the accession negotiations and involved in monitoring the implementation of the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The NLC should be able to submit comments and opinions for the attention of the EU institutions when they assess Albania's progress towards EU accession.</p>	<p>The promotion of social dialogue is a priority for the European Commission. Social dialogue is monitored on a continuous basis by the Commission in the context of the yearly sub-committee meetings that tackle employment and social policies, as well as in the yearly progress report.</p> <p>In the framework of the programming 2015, further involvement of the NLC is envisaged by Albania, especially regarding the elaboration of the employment policies, including wages and social benefits.</p>
<p>4.3 CSOs are most strongly represented in larger cities, primarily in Tirana, and less in remote districts or rural areas. Involvement of grassroots organisations, particularly outside the capital, remains a challenge to be addressed as a core financing priority for both national and EU financial assistance, i.e. encouraging the use of institutional support in national financial schemes for CSOs, developing a resource centre or reliable local NGOs focused on</p>	<p>The involvement of grassroots organisations has been under focus in the framework of the Civil Society Facility 2014/2015 that includes a sub-granting mechanism specifically targeting small-scale and grassroots organizations. The EU Delegation held three consultative meetings in 2015 in Tirana, Shkodra and Pogradec to present the Call for Proposal to organisations based in peripheral areas.</p> <p>Further to the Civil Society Facility,</p>



<p>community-building, supporting participatory processes to address local community issues, promoting the values of CSOs and of volunteering.</p>	<p>the European Commission also included EUR 1 million in 2014 for civil society involvement in the EU integration.</p>
<p>4.4 Donor strategies and funding priorities have to a certain extent influenced the areas where Albanian CSOs are active. At first, CSOs were more successful in providing services to vulnerable groups, in education, and in promoting human rights and women's rights, whereas in recent years the focus on advocacy through civic groups, think tanks and human rights organisations has become more visible and effective: human trafficking, the prison system, the environment, children's rights, social inclusion and poverty alleviation, domestic violence, youth involvement and LGBT rights. The active and professional involvement of CSOs in monitoring government commitments in core areas for EU accession, i.e. judicial reform, reform of the administration, public financial management and transparent public funding, should be further supported, including through provision of EU assistance to the country.</p>	<p>The European Commission involves Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in monitoring government commitments in core areas for EU accession. The already launched Civil Society Facility for instance is focused on good governance and the justice sector. It includes the following four Lots: (1) good governance and fight against corruption; (2) monitoring judiciary and access to justice; (3) monitoring living conditions in prisons and pre-detention; (4) re-use of confiscated assets to organized crime.</p>

<p><b>N°10 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products COM(2015) 45 final – EESCC 2015/0028 – NAT/666 508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Thomas MCDONOGH (GRI-IE) DG ENV – Commissioner VELLA</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>The amendment to the EU legislation must be adopted to comply with recommendations and rulings with regard to the Basic Regulation made on 18 June 2014 when the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) adopted the panel and appellate body reports.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's recognition of the importance of aligning the EU's legislation with the WTO ruling. The objective of bringing the seal regime in compliance with our international trade obligations has led the process from the very beginning and the Commission remains confident that the procedure for amending the Basic Regulation will be finished by 18 October 2015.</p>
<p>Rules and regulations for humane slaughter should be rigorously enforced by the various authorities including the EU. All possible steps should be taken to eliminate unnecessary suffering of the seal population.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view of the Committee that steps should be taken to eliminate unnecessary suffering of the seal population. The Commission proposal includes a new animal welfare condition in relation to the Inuit exception, which previously did not exist.</p>
<p>Realistic verifiable quotas including permissible killing methods must be put in place for the traditional hunting for subsistence purposes by Inuit communities. Animal welfare has to be respected simultaneously.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to recall that the EU seal regime only regulates the placing of seal products on the Union's market and does not regulate seal hunting as such. Given the fact that the Inuit seal hunt takes place outside the EU, the EU does not have the powers to regulate it by ways of</p>

	<p>introducing quotas. Prescribing permissible killing methods has certain limitations as most of the Inuit hunt takes place in Arctic regions where weather conditions and other specific circumstances of the hunt do not always leave a choice in hunting methods. The Commission has therefore introduced an obligation to take into account animal welfare, to the extent possible in such circumstances. The Commission is of the view that this strikes the right balance between the need to protect livelihood of the Inuit while at the same time addressing animal welfare concerns.</p>
<p>The quotas, hunting limits, other compliance issues, etc. should be properly monitored and policed.</p>	<p>With regard to the issue of compliance in general, the seal regime currently in place foresees an attestation procedure conducted by the recognized bodies in order for the seal products that satisfy the conditions to be placed on the Union's market. The process for inclusion on the list of recognized bodies is laid down in the implementing Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010. One of the conditions that recognized bodies have to fulfil concerns the capacity to monitor compliance with the conditions for the use of the exceptions. The Commission does not foresee significant changes to the attestation system. Finally, the Commission has proposed an additional guarantee, by way of a safeguard mechanism, in Article 3(5) which empowers the Commission to limit the quantity of seal products being placed on the market should</p>

	<p>there be a misuse of the Inuit exception.</p>
<p>1.5 The minimum requirement to a traceability scheme could be formulated as a set of requirements that economic operators looking to import into the EU must fulfil, including three key aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identification requirements</li> <li>2. Record and record-keeping requirements</li> <li>3. The ability to produce traceability reports (verification)</li> </ol>	<p>On the basis of the already existing detailed rules specified in the Implementing Regulation and attestation system carried out by the recognized bodies, seal products that are allowed to be placed on the Union's market must be accompanied by an attesting document, the format of which is annexed to Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010. Once the recognised body delivers the attestation document, it must keep a copy of it for three years for record keeping purposes. Furthermore, the attestation document follows the seal product at the time of placing on the Union's market. In case of doubts relating to the authenticity or correctness of an attesting document, each Member State must have at least one designated competent authority which, amongst other things, can verify the attesting document for imported seal products. As explained above, the Commission does not foresee significant changes to the attestation system in view of adaptation of the Commission Regulation to the changes that will have been adopted in the ongoing ordinary legislative procedure.</p>
<p>The EESC proposes to involve the Inuit Community in the process between the European Commission and the Canadian Government, in order to find together the best way to ensure the Inuit's continued</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the initiative of the Committee and would like to reiterate that it has, having in mind the specificities of individual Inuit communities, engaged with all the</p>

<p>right to subsistence, and, at the same time, to protect seals from international trade and extinction.</p>	<p>relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring a proper balance between protecting the livelihood of the Inuit and addressing animal welfare concerns.</p>
<p>The EESC shares the conditions, but suggests that the European Commission finds a good balance between seal protection and the Inuit's need to hunt them, as it is crucial for their survival. A non-pragmatic interpretation of said conditions could, in practice, impede the Inuit hunting of seals.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's view with respect to proposed conditions for the placing of seal products on the market. With regard to the Inuit exception, the Commission acknowledges concerns expressed by the Committee and is aware of the importance of seal hunting in Inuit communities. The Commission is committed to engage with the Inuit communities concerned to make use of the exception.</p>

**N°11 Investor protection and investor to state dispute settlement in EU trade and investment agreements with third countries (own-initiative opinion)  
EESC 2014/5356 - REX/411  
508<sup>th</sup> Plenary session - May 2015  
Rapporteur: Mr Sandy BOYLE (GR11-UK)  
DG TRADE – Commissioner MALMSTRÖM**

<b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>1.1. If a catch all solution for resolving investment disputes is to be found, it cannot be based on a modest revamping of the current ISDS system which has a very low level of public support.</p> <p>1.2. At a time when all G7 States are engaged in advanced negotiations on comprehensive trade and investment deals, there is a unique opportunity to find a credible system which marries the legitimate interests of investors with the rights of a state.</p> <p>1.3. If a unitary authority is to be the way forward, it should not be composed of private attorneys and must be more accessible to SMEs and have a built in right of appeal.</p> <p>1.4. The EESC strongly urges the European Commission to consider the UNCTAD proposals for Reform of ISDS and concludes that the establishment of an International Investment Court provides the best solution to ensure a democratic, fair, transparent and equitable system.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that the existing approach to Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), largely based on old bilateral investment treaties, needs to be reformed.</p> <p>The key challenge for the EU's reformed investment policy is the need to ensure that the goal of protecting and encouraging investment does not affect the ability of the EU and its Member States at any level to continue to pursue public policy objectives and regulate accordingly. A major part of the challenge is to make sure that any system for dispute settlement is fair, transparent and independent. The EU has already begun to address these challenges, through interactions with EU stakeholders and through the process of negotiation of the first generation of EU trade agreements that include investment protection and ISDS.</p> <p>The negotiations for the first two free trade agreements that include investment protection and ISDS were concluded in 2014 with Canada (CETA) and Singapore (EU Singapore FTA). The</p>

respective investment chapters include significant improvements compared to the standard international practice, in particular in the following areas:

- the right of States to regulate in the public interest has been expressly reaffirmed in relevant provisions of each of these two agreements.

- key concepts such as “fair and equitable treatment” and “indirect expropriation” have been defined precisely without leaving unwelcome discretion to arbitrators, particularly excluding claims against legitimate public policy measures;

- practices such as "forum shopping", use of "mailbox companies" to bring cases to arbitration or frivolous claims have been excluded with appropriate provisions;

- full, mandatory transparency has been brought to the arbitration process;

- the Parties have been given the capacity to issue binding interpretations on how the agreement should be interpreted, also with respect to on-going ISDS cases;

- for the first time, a code of conduct for arbitrators will ensure the respect of high ethical and professional standards;

- the Commission has created rules ensuring the early dismissal of unfounded claims. Under CETA, the Commission has introduced a fast track system that will allow rejecting unfounded or frivolous claims in just a matter of weeks;

	<p>- the ground has been prepared for a future appellate mechanism.</p> <p>Following the public consultation on TTIP, four areas have been identified where particular concerns were raised. On this basis, further improvements to the EU's approach have been proposed in the recently published Concept paper on "Investment in TTIP and beyond – the path for reform"<sup>1</sup>. They concern in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) the protection of the right to regulate: in this respect, the Commission envisages to ensure that all future agreements include a specific legal provision to ensure that investment protection rules do not undermine the right to regulate in the EU at any level;</li><li>ii) the establishment and functioning of arbitral tribunals, including steps to transform the system towards one which functions more like traditional courts systems – e.g. assimilating arbitrators' qualifications to those of national judges;</li><li>iii) the relationship between domestic judicial systems and ISDS, for instance by preventing parallel claims;</li><li>iv) the review of ISDS decisions through an appellate mechanism.</li></ul> <p>In this latter respect, the Commission</p>
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<sup>1</sup> [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/may/tradoc\\_153408.PDF](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/may/tradoc_153408.PDF).



considers that the EU should work with international partners towards the establishment of an international investment court, including an appellate mechanism, with tenured judges with the vocation in the longer term to replace the traditional bilateral mechanism. In doing so, the Commission also considers the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) proposals for the reform of ISDS.

This has been reflected in the Commission's proposal of 16 September 2015 for a new and transparent system for resolving disputes between investors and states – the Investment Court System. According to this proposal:

- an Investment Court System would replace the existing investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism in all ongoing and future EU investment negotiations, including the EU-US talks on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Built around the same key elements as domestic and international courts, it protects governments' right to regulate and ensures transparency and accountability.

- the Investment Court System would be a system composed of a first instance Tribunal and an Appeal Tribunal;

- judgements would be made by judges appointed by the contracting parties with high qualifications, comparable to those required for the members of permanent international courts such as the International Court of Justice and the WTO Appellate Body;

- the new Appeal Tribunal would be operating on similar principles to the WTO Appellate Body;

- the ability of investors to take a case before the Tribunal would be precisely defined and limited to cases such as targeted discrimination on the basis of gender, race or religion, or nationality, expropriation without compensation, or denial of justice;

- governments' right to regulate would be enshrined and guaranteed in the provisions of the trade and investment agreements.

The Commission will now have discussions with the Council and the European Parliament. Once the text of the proposal has been discussed, it will be presented as an EU text proposal in the EU-US trade talks and will be used in other ongoing and future negotiations.

Finally, in parallel to the TTIP negotiations, the Commission will start work, together with other countries, on setting up a permanent International Investment Court. The objective is that over time the International Investment Court would replace all investment dispute resolution mechanisms provided in EU agreements, EU Member States' agreements with third countries and in trade and investment treaties concluded between non-EU countries. This would further increase the efficiency, consistency and legitimacy of the international investment dispute resolution system.

<p><b>N°12    Completing EMU: The political pillar (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2015/0551 – ECO/376</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session – May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteurs: Mr Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT), Mr Joost VAN IERSEL (GRI-NL)</b>  <b>DG ECFIN – Commissioner MOSCOVICI</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>The Commission would like to thank the European Economic and Social Committee for its thorough and comprehensive opinion on the political pillar of the Economic and Monetary Union. It not only analyses the current state of play and shortcomings of the EMU but also makes very interesting proposals for completing it.</p>	
<p>The EESC proposes a roadmap in three phases (p.3/4/5) that implies several changes for euro area governance. Going beyond the existing Treaties, step 2 would lead to the establishment of an EMU executive (government) for economic policies, a role which is currently performed by the Commission and the Eurogroup. Its President would be a Vice-President of the Commission and would operate as minister for the economy and finance for the euro area; s/he would chair the Eurogroup meetings and could represent EMU in international bodies.</p>	<p>The Five Presidents' report on 'Completing Europe's EMU' published on 22 June 2015 also offers a stepwise approach to strengthening the euro-area governance. The report proposes a shift from a system of rules and guidelines for national economic policy-making, to a system of further sovereignty sharing within common institutions. The first step uses the existing instruments and Treaties to "Deepen by doing". In terms of institutional changes, it foresees a reinforcement of the steer of the Eurogroup, a consolidated external representation of the euro area and an integration into the framework of EU law of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance; the relevant parts of the Euro Plus Pact; and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Single Resolution Fund. The second step envisions the establishment of benchmarks for convergence, a euro-</p>

	<p>area treasury, and a macroeconomic stabilisation function for the euro area.</p>
<p>The EESC makes concrete proposals relative to a political union, with several important suggestions for increased democratic legitimacy and accountability.</p> <p>The EESC considers that in the medium-long term a revision of the Treaty should bring the institutional provisions in line with the indispensable requirements of a real economic and political Union. The EESC would like a more effective political management of the EMU to take place. One of the proposals is to increase political acceptance by governments of the agreed rules at EU-level, notably concerning the need for structural reforms in all Member States. The EESC suggests the creation of a permanent body within the EP for members from the countries that have joined the single currency or are preparing to do so; harnessing and expanding the remit of the Interparliamentary Conference (article 13 of the TSCG); and a more visible involvement of national political players, such as national parliaments, in EU policies that affect them directly.</p>	<p>The Five Presidents' report on Completing Europe's EMU published on 22 June 2015 singles out four fronts where progress needs to be made towards: a genuine Economic Union, a Financial Union; a Fiscal Union and a Political Union. The latter should provide the foundation for all of them through a genuine democratic accountability, legitimacy and institutional strengthening. As all four Unions depend on each other, their development shall take place in parallel and all euro area Member States must participate in all Unions. In each case, progress will have to follow a sequence of short- and longer-term steps.</p> <p>Greater responsibility and integration at euro area level should go hand in hand with greater democratic accountability and legitimacy. In line with the EESC proposals, the Commission is of the opinion that this includes notably an increased role of the European Parliament and national parliaments including better cooperation between the two, and improved stakeholder involvement.</p>

<p><b>N°13 Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation</b></p> <p><b>COM(2015) 135 final</b></p> <p><b>Proposal for a Council Directive repealing Council Directive 2003/48/EC</b></p> <p><b>COM(2015) 129 final</b></p> <p><b>EESC 2015/1828 - ECO/381</b></p> <p><b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur: Mr Petru Sorin DANDEA (GR11-RO)</b></p> <p><b>DG TAXUD - Commissioner MOSCOVICI</b></p>	
<p><b>Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation</b></p> <p><b>COM(2015) 135 final</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>1.4 General support for swift adoption</p>	<p>The Commission very much welcomes the support of the EESC for the adoption of the proposal, which is seen as a useful measure to combat tax avoidance and evasion.</p>
<p>1.6 Negotiating efforts in the OECD</p>	<p>The Commission has always been supportive of and closely involved in the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (OECD BEPS) project. The EU proposal is more ambitious than the current OECD project, but consistent. It is in the EU's interest that the exchange of information on tax rulings becomes mandatory on a global scale.</p>
<p>4.2 Follow-up work to simplify and harmonise the legal framework at</p>	<p>Increasing transparency is only a first step. Additional measures have to be taken in order to close loopholes and to</p>

<p>European and national levels</p>	<p>eliminate mismatches between national tax systems. This is why the Commission, on 17 June 2015, adopted an Action Plan for a fair and efficient corporate taxation in the EU. The Action Plan sets to reform the corporate tax framework in the EU, in order to tackle tax abuse, ensure sustainable revenues and support a better business environment in the Single Market.</p>
<p>4.5 Sufficient resources and proper implementation</p>	<p>Proper implementation of the proposal based on sufficiently trained human resources and appropriate IT infrastructure is crucial. The Commission will contribute towards achieving these objectives in the best way it can.</p>
<p><b>Proposal for a Council Directive repealing Council Directive 2003/48/EC</b></p> <p><b>COM(2015) 129 final</b></p>	
<p>1.7 The EESC welcomes the Commission proposal repealing the Savings Directive.</p>	<p>The Commission very much welcomes the support of the EESC for the adoption of the proposal, which is aimed at preventing the parallel application of two standards, and at simplifying the rules for tax administrations and financial institutions.</p>
<p>2.3 The repeal of the Savings Directive is necessary because, with the adoption on 9 December 2014 of Council Directive 2014/107/EU amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation (AEOI), which aligns EU legislation with the global standard on the automatic exchange of financial account information, this Directive will now also cover savings, along with the other</p>	<p>Directive 2014/107/EU is generally broader in scope than Directive 2003/48/EC and provides that in cases of overlap of scope, Directive 2014/107/EU prevails. Where, in limited instances, the scope of Directive 2003/48/EC lies outside the scope of Directive 2014/107/EU, the relevant provisions of Directive 2003/48/EC would continue to apply resulting in dual reporting standards within the</p>

categories of income.	Union. The minor benefits of retaining such dual reporting would be outweighed by the costs.
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<p><b>N°14 Long term care and deinstitutionalisation (exploratory opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/7336 – SOC/517</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Ms Gunta ANČA (GRI-ES)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Mr José Isaias RODRIGUEZ GARCIA-CARO (GRI-ES)</b>  <b>DG EMPL - Commissioner THYSSEN</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>1.4. and 6.5.: The EESC recommends that Member States use European Structural and Investment Funds to promote the transition from institutional to community-based care, to develop social and health services and to train support services staff.</p>	<p>The new regulatory framework on the ESI Funds already supports the process of de-institutionalisation and the objective of ensuring the right to independent living in line with article 19 CPRD.</p> <p>A thematic ex-ante conditionality requires that national strategies for reducing poverty aiming at active inclusion include measures to support the shift to community-based services. The legal framework contains obligations for Member States to report on how non-discrimination and accessibility for people with disabilities are implemented through the funds.</p> <p>In addition, Member States are asked to demonstrate the existence of administrative capacity for the Convention's implementation, as part of a general ex-ante conditionality on disability.</p> <p>The European Social Fund should support the fulfilment of the Union's obligation under the Convention with regard to education, work, employment and accessibility. It should not support any</p>



	<p>action that contributes to segregation or social exclusion. Under Article 8 of the ESF Regulation, actions must aim to combat all forms of discrimination and to improve accessibility, with a view to improving integration into employment, education and training, thereby enhancing social inclusion, reducing inequalities, and facilitating the transition from institutional to community-based care, in particular for those who face multiple discrimination.</p> <p>The transition from institutional to community-based services is one of the aims of investments in health and social infrastructure under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)<sup>1</sup>. Only those actions that help to establish the conditions for independent living should be supported by the EU. Any measure contributing to further institutionalisation of disabled people or the elderly should not be supported by ESI Funds<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>The results of this policy change are being monitored and will be reported on at the planned mid-term review of the ESIF programmes.</p>
<p>1.15. and 7.1.: The EESC urges the European Commission to adopt a European Quality Framework for community-based services and reiterates</p>	<p>The Commission has already developed a voluntary European Quality Framework for social services, which was adopted by the Social Protection</p>

<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013, Article 5 (9)(a).

<sup>2</sup> DG REGIO Thematic Guidance Fiche for desk officers: Transition from institutional to community-based care (de-institutionalisation - DI), [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\\_deinstitutionalisation.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_deinstitutionalisation.pdf).

<p>the urgent need for binding standards to ensure the highest levels of quality.</p>	<p>Committee on 6 October 2010. It aims at creating a common language on social services quality across the EU. It identifies overarching principles referring to the characteristics that a social service should have in order to address the multiple needs and expectations of the service user (Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, Person-centeredness, Comprehensiveness, Continuity and Orientation Towards Outcomes). It also highlights principles related to three dimensions of service provision: (i) the relationships between service providers and users (respect for users' rights, participation and empowerment), (ii) the relationships between service providers, public authorities and other stakeholders (partnership, good governance) and (iii) human and physical capital (good working conditions and working environment/investment in human capital, adequate physical infrastructure).</p>
<p>2.3.6.: The EESC draws attention to the obligations incumbent on the EU and its Member States – deriving from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) – to respect people's dignity, liberty and right to live independently, to choose where and with whom they do so and to have access to support services, including personal assistance, in the community.</p>	<p>The Commission will continue to discuss the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with Member States, including the right to live independently, in particular in the Disability High-level Group and the annual Work Forum on the Convention. Discussion has focused not only on the transition from institutional to community-based care, but also on other conditions which are necessary in order to enable people with disabilities to live independently - including through accessibility, and by promoting access to employment and</p>

	education - and on how the European Structural and Investment Funds can support such measures.
<p>4.1.: The EESC welcomes good examples, e.g. care leave, part-time care leave and the recognition of insurance for informal caregivers. It calls on the Commission and Member States to encourage the exchange of best practice.</p>	<p>While the Member States are responsible for the accessibility, quality and sustainability of long-term care, the Commission seeks to support them in their efforts, notably through the sharing of experience. It funded a 2011 OECD report "Help Wanted? Providing and Paying for Long-Term Care"<sup>1</sup>, which looks in particular at the impact of caring on relatives, and reviews national policies to support family carers (such as leave and working arrangements and financial support).</p> <p>A Commission document on long-term care<sup>2</sup> included in the 2013 Social Investment Package discusses the role of family carers and outlines the impact of caring in terms of their income situation, pension entitlements and health. A 2014 Social Protection Committee and Commission report on "Adequate social protection for long-term care needs in an ageing society"<sup>3</sup> calls on the Member States to step up support for informal carers and make it easier for them to reconcile employment and care responsibilities.</p>
<p>5.6.: The EESC urges the Council, the Commission and the Member States to ensure that social investment is</p>	<p>In line with the Treaties, the EU supports and complements the activities of the Member States in the field of social</p>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/help-wanted\\_9789264097759-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/help-wanted_9789264097759-en).

<sup>2</sup> Long-term care in ageing societies – Challenges and policy options’ (SWD(2013) 41 final of 20 February 2013), at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/adequate-social-protection-for-long-term-care-needs-in-an-ageing-society-pbKE0414706/>.

<p>channelled toward social protection policies, to – at least – restore the levels that were in place prior to the economic crisis.</p>	<p>policy notably by providing policy guidance, promoting the exchange of best practice and mobilising European Funds.</p> <p>The European Semester<sup>1</sup> provides the framework for providing policy guidance and steering and monitoring EU countries' economic and social reforms to reach the Europe 2020 targets, and notably the one on poverty and social exclusion.<sup>2</sup> In the 2015 European Semester, the Commission has proposed recommendations for the Member States to ensure that investment is channelled towards effective social protection and social inclusion policies. Country-specific recommendations have been addressed to various Member States inter alia to improve the adequacy and coverage of unemployment benefits and social assistance, ensure access to quality healthcare, improve the provision of affordable and quality childcare, or address early school leaving.</p> <p>The Commission encourages the Member States to put in place integrated active inclusion policies combining the provision of adequate, well-designed income support, inclusive labour market policies and access to quality social services provided in an integrated way<sup>3</sup>. In this context, the Commission is raising</p>
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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_en.htm).

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Recommendation of 3.10.2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market (2008/867/EC published in the OJ L. 307/11 of 18.11.2008).

<sup>4</sup> Reference budgets (comprising a basket of goods and services) reflect the needs of various types of household, and can therefore serve as a benchmark for minimum income schemes.

awareness and facilitating policy developments related to the strengthening of national minimum income schemes and is developing a common methodology for reference budgets<sup>4</sup> in consultation with the Member States. In the area of social services, the Commission recently published a literature review which identifies best practice on integrated social services delivery related to labour market and social integration or reintegration.

Moreover, the Commission mobilises financial aid available through the European Structural and Investment Funds. Particularly, in the new programming period of the European Social Fund, a minimum of 20% of the envelope is ring-fenced for social inclusion projects. The new European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived can be used to finance emergency aid projects and provide material assistance.

<p><b>N°15      Fostering creativity, entrepreneurship and mobility in education and training (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2015/6567 - SOC/518</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GRI-CZ)</b>  <b>DG EMPL – Commissioner THYSSEN</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>Recommendation 1.5.: High quality traineeships, internships, apprenticeships, dual or other work-based systems, start-ups and incubator programmes, volunteering and sports activities can ease the transition from school to work or self-employment.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the opinion of the EESC expressed under Recommendation 1.5. which is fully in line with one of the five key priorities set in the area of vocational education and training for the period 2015 – 2020 in the Riga Conclusions adopted on 22 June 2015: <i>"Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with a focus on apprenticeships by involving social partners, companies and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship"</i>.</p>
<p>Recommendation 1.6.: The procedures for the recognition of knowledge acquired outside school need to be improved and learners, educators and employers must be involved in the design of recognition processes and be motivated by them.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the opinion of the EESC to enhance recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning, a recommendation which is fully in line with the 2012 European Recommendation on validation of informal and non-formal learning. The 2012 Recommendation on validation provides a strong platform for intensified European cooperation in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning. Member States, education and training institutions, social partners and other relevant stakeholders have been invited to intensify work in this area and, by 2018, put in place appropriate national</p>

	arrangements allowing individuals to value and make visible the outcomes of learning at work, at home, during leisure time and in voluntary activities.
Recommendation 1.8: The EESC supports the Commission proposal addressed to the Member States to develop a competence reference framework for entrepreneurship within the context of the Key Competences Framework. This would help to ensure a coordinated approach across different levels of education and consideration for non-formal and informal learning.	The Commission welcomes this opinion of the EESC and is actually developing a common EU entrepreneurship competence framework enabling individuals to assess and describe their level of being entrepreneurial (available 2016). This competency framework will facilitate the recognition of prior and informal learning in this field.
Recommendation 1.11.: The EESC urges the Commission to provide Member States with support and appropriate assistance in implementing Erasmus+, ensuring that all its instruments function properly.	The Commission is actively assisting Member States in Erasmus+ implementation. In addition, Erasmus+ structures such as the SALTO network provide support to Erasmus+ national agencies by offering resources on youth entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship such as thematic publications, training modules for youth workers, or conferences and seminars.

<p><b>N°16 Proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States</b>  <b>COM(2015) 98 final - EESC 2015/1167 - SOC/519</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Carlos Manuel TRINDADE (GR11-PT)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Ms Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ (GR1-CZ)</b>  <b>DG EMPL – Vice-President DOMBROVSKIS</b></p>	
<b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>1.6.2.: Conclusions and recommendations - The guidelines should set quantified objectives for employment and poverty reduction.</p>	<p>The Commission accepts that action in line with these guidelines is an important contribution for the EU to the Europe 2020 strategy's objectives.</p> <p>This has been explicitly added to the original Commission guidelines' proposal.</p> <p>The review of the Europe 2020 strategy will be presented by the end of 2015 or early 2016.</p>
<p>5.1.: Boosting demand for labour (Guideline 5) - Add promoting job stability and the quality of jobs.</p>	<p>The Commission can agree with a further strengthening of the reference to the creation of quality jobs.</p> <p>This concern, present from the start, has been more explicitly incorporated in the guidelines' proposal.</p>
<p>5.2 Enhancing labour supply and skills (Guideline 6) – Include a specific and measurable target for combating youth unemployment and a regular assessment of whether resources are spent to good effect.</p>	<p>The Commission notes the EESC opinion on a specific and measurable target for combating youth unemployment.</p> <p>With regard to the financial resources being spent on this policy priority, the Commission refers to the tighter link</p>



	<p>with, and follow-up under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and notably the European Social Fund (ESF) or the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).</p>
<p>5.3.: Enhancing the functioning of labour markets (Guideline 7) – Involvement of social partners must be in keeping with national practices and respect for the autonomy of social partners. The qualitative aspect of jobs is of utmost importance and there is a need to monitor labour market segmentation and the qualitative (contractual) aspects of the new jobs created.</p>	<p>The Commission in its employment guidelines proposal fully recognizes the need to involve social partners and respect national practice.</p> <p>The Commission notes the EESC opinion on monitoring labour markets including labour market segmentation and qualitative aspects of new jobs, and refers to its annual Joint Employment Report in this respect.</p>
<p>5.4.: Ensuring fairness, combating poverty and promoting equal opportunities (Guideline 8) - Remove the proposed automatic linkage of the statutory retirement age to life expectancy in Member States, inserting conversely the need to promote measures that bring the actual (retirement) age closer to the statutory retirement age.</p>	<p>The Commission does not subscribe to the EESC opinion on pension systems.</p> <p>The Commission feels its proposal in this respect remains entirely within well-established EU policy, as expressed inter alia in the Council conclusions of 15 May 2012 on the sustainability of public finances in the light of ageing.</p> <p>Moreover, in a number of Member States, linking the statutory retirement age to life expectancy is already a feature of the pension system: this is for instance the case in Italy, Cyprus, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Slovakia. And the approach presents an effective tool for increasing sustainability in public pension systems.</p> <p>Furthermore, by increasing statutory retirement ages, people can accrue</p>

	more pension rights and thus a higher pension when labour markets provide for working longer. There is thus also a positive effect on pension adequacy.
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<p><b>N°17 Living tomorrow. 3D printing – a tool to empower the European economy (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>EESC 2014/4420 - CCMI/131</b>  <b>508<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - May 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Dumitru FORNEA (GRII-RO)</b>  <b>Corapporteur: Ms Hilde VAN LAERE (GRI-BE)</b>  <b>DG RTD – Commissioner MOEDAS</b></p>	
<b>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>1.1 Additive Manufacturing (AM) is one of the key enabling technologies that will shape new approaches to manufacturing and the Products and Factories of the Future.</p> <p>2.6 Europe needs to be in pole position when the industrialisation of AM kicks off. Future growth is expected to be achieved by extending current activities and by opening up new activities along the value chain.</p>	<p>The industrialisation of AM is already taking place in some sectors, while in others it has not yet got under way. In addition to the need to step up investments, Member States act in a fragmented manner<sup>1</sup> and there is a risk of a widening innovation gap with respect to AM. Already now, only seven Member States produce 75% of the EU's industrial output.</p>
<p>1.2. The EESC believes that the EU can keep up its current position as a major global player in additive manufacturing, but in order to achieve this the following measures must be taken at European and national level:</p> <p>1.3 Investments in ICT infrastructure;</p> <p>1.4 The European capacity for storage and transmission of large amounts of digital data must be strengthened and updated and the</p>	<p>3D printing brings together digital technologies and physical systems, and is an important example for the potential of cyber-physical systems and the digitalisation of manufacturing and industry in practice.</p> <p>AM still faces a number of challenges. Europe needs coordinated R&amp;I investments to develop further and deploy the capabilities of AM, broadening its market</p>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rm-platform.com/linkdoc/EC%20AM%20Workshop%20Report%202014.pdf>.

<p>protection of these data guaranteed;</p> <p>1.5 The EU institutions and national governments should prepare people for the challenges of the digital society and related disruptive technologies such as AM, through investments in cultural, educational and training programmes;</p> <p>1.6 Research and creativity need to be encouraged (via financial and fiscal incentives) in companies and relevant educational and scientific institutions;</p> <p>1.7 Additional research is needed to expand the range of materials and the number of applications, and to improve the robustness, speed, productivity and maturity of this technology.</p> <p>1.8 The European Innovation Partnerships must streamline efforts to develop new materials for AM and increased number of suppliers that will promote more competitive pricing, open up new industrial sectors and create higher volumes of AM materials and more competitive supply markets;</p> <p>1.9 The EU must facilitate investments in new AM equipment and should encourage the development of additive manufacturing technology in open production systems that are flexible and easy to integrate;</p> <p>1.10 The European and national regulatory framework was unable to keep up with the fast pace of change in additive</p>	<p>opportunities. In Horizon 2020 and the preceding Framework Programmes, a number of activities related to AM and 3D-Printing have been supported. More than 70 projects with a total volume of EUR 180 million EU funding have paved the way towards today's state of the art. The Work Programme 2016-2017 in Horizon 2020 will take this further through specific activities of technical nature as well as activities to address current bottlenecks and barriers in the deployment of AM technologies in Europe.</p> <p>A European initiative "3D-Printed in Europe" could bring together research and innovation efforts and link them to a promotion strategy for the establishment of a broad industrial base for AM in Europe, combining private and public forces to raise Europe's share in the global manufacturing and services markets linked to AM.</p> <p>European initiatives and actions such as the future Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) of the European Institute for Technology (EIT) on Added-Value Manufacturing should address the AM-relevant issues in good alignment with the Factories-of-the-Future Public Private Partnership under Horizon 2020.</p> <p>The Commission will address the question of digital skills in the context of the initiative to promote the digitalisation of</p>
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[http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query/resultaction.jsp?QueryText=Commission+Communication+%22A+vision+for+the+internal+market+for+industrial+products%22+adopted+in+2014+&query\\_source=GROWTH&swlang=en&x=0&y=0](http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query/resultaction.jsp?QueryText=Commission+Communication+%22A+vision+for+the+internal+market+for+industrial+products%22+adopted+in+2014+&query_source=GROWTH&swlang=en&x=0&y=0).

<p>manufacturing, which is why a specific regulation is needed to deal primarily with standards and certification, intellectual property, consumer protection, health and safety at work, and the environment;</p> <p>1.11 The regulatory process concerning AM needs to be based on interdisciplinary and scientific research into the impact of this technology, with the full involvement of all stakeholders.</p>	<p>European industry and enterprises.</p> <p>An innovation friendly regulatory environment is a key condition to bringing new technologies to the market.</p> <p>The regulatory framework for 3D printing has been addressed in Annex II of the Commission Communication "A vision for the internal market for industrial products" adopted in 2014<sup>1</sup> and deserves deeper analysis.</p> <p>In June 2014, the Commission organized the first workshop on AM in order to understand the needs of the AM sector and to discuss policy measures to enhance its competitiveness and to remove current barriers for further development of AM technologies.</p> <p>The workshop also confirmed the need for a European coordinated policy initiative on Additive Manufacturing that could cover the following aspects:</p> <p>Changes in production and consumption paradigms; potential new business models; the key role of SMEs in the wide range of applications related to AM; productivity and resource efficiency gains; fostering the take-up of AM technologies at industrial level; the development of new skills in industry and academia; regulatory and standardisation frameworks suitable for AM growth; novel financial instruments (e.g. crowdfunding); access of European AM products to new markets.</p> <p>In June 2015, a new study was launched to analyse the assets and missing competences in a significant number of EU</p>
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	<p>regions in order to develop new innovative applications and identify scope for trans-regional cooperation to address new challenges through additive manufacturing.</p>
<p>The EESC requests to create a specific Working Group and the development of a Roadmap for AM and 3D-Printing.</p>	<p>The stakeholders are already organised in a platform for AM and the Commission has been interacting with them to define a strategy to support research and innovation in this. The current work programme includes a coordinating initiative for AM, including 3D printing, which could become the nucleus for a wider involvement of stakeholders.</p>