

SUIVI ACCORDÉ PAR LA COMMISSION AUX AVIS DU

COMITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL EUROPÉEN

RENDUS AU COURS DES SESSIONS PLENIERES DE FEVRIER ET MARS
2015

N°	Titre	Références	Mois plénière
SG			
1.	<p>Les avancées de la mise en œuvre de la stratégie Europe 2020 et les moyens de réaliser ses objectifs d'ici 2020</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Etele BARÁTH (GRIII-HU)</p>	<p>EESC-2015-00034-PAC-TRA</p> <p>EUR/007</p> <p>avis exploratoire demandé par la présidence lettone</p>	février
2.	<p>Examen annuel de la croissance 2015 (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, à la Banque centrale européenne, au Comité économique et social européen, au Comité des régions et à la Banque européenne d'investissement sur l'examen annuel de la croissance 2015</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Gonçalo LOBO XAVIER (GRI-PT)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 902 final</p> <p>EESC-2015-00071-PAC-TRA</p> <p>EUR/008</p>	février
3.	<p>Réexamen de la gouvernance économique (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, à la Banque centrale européenne, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions - Réexamen de la gouvernance économique - Rapport sur l'application des règlements (UE) n° 1173/2011, (UE) n° 1174/2011, (UE) n° 1175/2011, (UE) n° 1176/2011, (UE) n° 1177/2011, (UE) n° 472/2013 et (UE) n° 473/2013</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. David CROUGHAN (GRI-IE)</p> <p>Co-rapporteur: M. Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 905 final</p> <p>EESC-2014-07288-AS-TRA</p> <p>ECO/375</p>	mars

DG GROW				
4.	<p>Limites d'émissions et réception par type/EMNR</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif aux exigences concernant les limites d'émissions et la réception par type pour les moteurs à combustion interne destinés aux engins mobiles non routiers</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Brendan BURNS (GRI-UK)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 581 final - 2014/0268 COD</p> <p>EESC-2014-06067-AS-TRA</p> <p>INT/763</p>	février	
5.	<p>Indication géographique de l'UE/Produits non agricoles (livre vert)</p> <p>Tirer le meilleur parti du savoir-faire traditionnel de l'Europe: une possible extension de la protection de l'indication géographique de l'Union européenne aux produits non agricoles</p> <p>Rapporteur: M^{me} Kathleen WALKER SHAW (GRII-UK)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 469 final</p> <p>EESC-2014-05991-AS-TRA</p> <p>INT/760</p>	février	
DG EMPL				
6.	<p>Éradiquer l'amiante de l'U</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Aurel Laurențiu PLOSCEANU (GRI-RO)</p> <p>Co-rapporteur: M. Enrico GIBELLIERI (Cat. 2 – IT)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-05005-AS-TRA</p> <p>CCMI/130</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	février	
DGs GROW, SANTE, ENV associés	7.	<p>L'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes – Préfinancement</p> <p>Proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil modifiant le règlement (UE) n° 1304/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil relatif au Fonds social européen afin d'augmenter le montant du préfinancement initial versé aux programmes opérationnels soutenus par l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes</p> <p>Rapporteur général: M. Pavel TRANTINA (GRIII-CZ)</p>	<p>COM(2015) 46 final - 2015/0026 COD</p> <p>EESC-2015-01246-PAC-TRA</p> <p>SOC/522</p>	mars

DG REGIO			
8.	<p>Proposition de cartographie des stratégies macro-régionales en Europe</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Etele BARÁTH (GRIII-HU)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-02544-AS-TRA</p> <p>ECO/362</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	février
9.	<p>Les îles intelligentes</p> <p>Rapporteur: M^{me} Anna Maria DARMANIN (GRII-MT)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-05752-AS-TRA</p> <p>TEN/558</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	mars
DG TAXUD			
10.	<p>Gestion des risques en matière douanière (communication)</p> <p>Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil et au Comité économique et social européen relative à la stratégie et au plan d'action de l'UE sur la gestion des risques en matière douanière: faire face aux risques, renforcer la sécurité de la chaîne d'approvisionnement et faciliter le commerce</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER (GRIII-ES)</p> <p>Co-rapporteur: M. Jan SIMONS (GRI-NL)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 527 final</p> <p>EESC-2014-06021-AS-TRA</p> <p>INT/761</p>	février

DG FISMA			
11.	<p>Système européen de surveillance financière (SESF) – Révision</p> <p>Rapport de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur le fonctionnement des autorités européennes de surveillance (AES) et du Système européen de surveillance financière (SESF)</p> <p>Rapport de la Commission au Parlement européen et au Conseil sur la mission et l'organisation du Comité européen du risque systémique (CERS)</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT)</p>	<p>COM(2014) 509 final</p> <p>COM(2014) 508 final</p> <p>EESC-2014-05561-AS-TRA</p> <p>ECO/373</p>	février
DG REGIO associé	<p>12. Le rôle des coopératives de crédit et des caisses d'épargne pour la cohésion territoriale – Propositions en vue d'un cadre de régulation financière adapté</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Carlos TRIAS PINTÓ (GRIII-ES)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-04516-AS-TRA</p> <p>ECO/371</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	février
DG ENER			
13.	<p>La coopération européenne en matière de réseaux énergétiques</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Pierre Jean COULON (GRII-FR)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-06650-AS-TRA</p> <p>TEN/564</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	mars
DG SANTE			
14.	<p>Le système actuel destiné à garantir la sécurité des aliments et des approvisionnements alimentaires dans l'UE et les possibilités de son amélioration</p> <p>Rapporteur: M. Igor ŠARMÍR (GRI-SK)</p>	<p>EESC-2014-02479-AS-TRA</p> <p>NAT/633</p> <p>avis d'initiative</p>	mars

DG ECFIN			
15.	Un plan d'investissement pour l'Europe (communication)	COM(2015) 10 final - 2015/0009 COD	mars
SG D 1 co-lead, DG BUDG associé	Communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, à la Banque centrale européenne, au Comité économique et social européen, au Comité des régions et à la Banque européenne d'investissement – Un plan d'investissement pour l'Europe Rapporteur: M. Michael SMYTH (GRIII-UK)	COM(2014) 903 final EESC-2014-07287-AS-TRA ECO/374	
DG TRADE			
16.	Le rôle du développement durable et la participation de la société civile dans les accords d'investissement autonomes entre l'UE et les pays tiers	EESC-2014-04461-AS-TRA REX/410 avis d'initiative	mars
	Rapporteur: M. Jonathan PEEL (GRI-UK)		

<p>N°1 Progress made on implementing the Europe 2020 strategy and how to achieve its targets by 2020 (exploratory opinion) EESC 2015/0034 - EUR/007 505th Plenary Session – February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr BARATH (GR11-HU) SG – Vice-President KATAINEN</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC outlines the need for an overarching medium- and long-term vision and a greater sense of ownership.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the view of the EESC. This has been at the core of the strategy since its start. Europe 2020 has been set as the medium- to long-term strategy for jobs and growth and was launched with a vision of the long-term challenges confronting the EU.</p> <p>The importance of the involvement of stakeholders (national governments, Parliaments, regional and local authorities, businesses, social partners, civil society...) is reflected in the partnership approach of the strategy and remains of vital importance for its success. The results of the public consultation held between May and October 2014 on Europe 2020 have shown that there is scope and a need to enhance ownership and involvement of actors on the ground.</p>
<p>The EESC stresses the impact of the financial crisis on the effectiveness, appropriateness and legitimacy of the targets and governance models and that the EU is now much further away from the Europe 2020 goals than it was in 2010.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that the crisis has had a negative impact on and made more difficult the path towards the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets. Yet, even in the heights of the crisis, the Europe 2020 strategy and its targets have served as a useful long-term agenda of priorities for jobs and</p>

	<p>growth, for instance regarding the allocation of EU funds. Thus, the crisis has not questioned the appropriateness and the legitimacy of the strategy or its features, as also confirmed by the results of the public consultation.</p> <p>In addition, despite the crisis there have been more positive structural trends, for instance in education levels, building a more sustainable energy mix and the reduction in the carbon intensity of the economy. Therefore, the picture of progress towards the Europe 2020 targets is a mixed one: the EU is on course to meet or come close to its targets on education, climate and energy but not on employment, research and development or on poverty reduction.</p>
<p>The EESC expresses support for the ongoing discussion in the European Commission on applying the financial golden rule.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to recall the guidance given on the investment clause in the Communication on making best use of flexibility within the existing rules of the Stability and Growth Pact of January 2015.</p>
<p>The EESC underlines the importance of improving and further strengthening governance.</p>	<p>On top of the streamlined European Semester presented in the 2015 Annual Growth Survey and that the Commission is currently implementing, work is ongoing on deepening the Economic and Monetary Union. The Commission indicated that any proposals for the review of Europe 2020 will be fully consistent with the ongoing work on deepening the Economic and Monetary Union.</p>
<p>The EESC urges the Commission to step up the fight against tax fraud.</p>	<p>The fight against tax avoidance and</p>

	<p>evasion is high on the agenda of the Commission's priorities. Two major deliverables have been included in the Commission's Work Programme 2015. Ensuring more tax transparency in the EU - a key condition for effectively combatting avoidance and evasion - was a first step. The second step, an Action Plan of measures on corporate taxation, is in preparation.</p>
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N°2	<p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank – Annual Growth Survey 2015 COM(2014) 902 final – EESC 2015/0071 - EUR/008 505th Plenary Session – February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr LOBO XAVIER (GRI-PT) SG – Vice-President DOMBROVSKIS</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>	
<p>The EESC indicates the lack of emphasis on social aspects and challenges in the Annual Growth Survey (AGS).</p>	<p>The Commission would like to underline the importance of the social dimension on its agenda, as evidenced in the political guidelines of President Juncker where he outlined his agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change.</p> <p>The Annual Growth Survey also recognises that unemployment rates and the social situation strongly vary across Member States and that particularly the high rate of unemployment among young people as well as the consistently high rate of long-term unemployment is of concern.</p> <p>The Annual Growth Survey recalled that employment and social indicators are being introduced into the macroeconomic imbalances procedure and should be fully used to gain a better understanding of the labour market and social developments and risks.</p> <p>The Commission has this year provided analyses of the follow-up of reforms, including their social impact, in the Country Reports which bring together</p>	

	<p>the In-Depth Review of macroeconomic developments with the overall analysis previously given in Staff Working Documents, thus integrating employment and social analysis with macroeconomic and fiscal analysis.</p>
<p>The EESC stresses the importance that the Commission engages with the European Parliament and the social partners as well as other civil society organisations at European level, before the AGS is presented.</p>	<p>Opening up the process and increasing engagement with other actors is one of the key objectives of the streamlined European Semester.</p> <p>In the 2015 Annual Growth Survey, the Commission recognises that there is room for wider dialogue, not only with the Parliaments, but also with the social partners. For example, the Commission could in the future engage with the European Parliament and the social partners at European level before the Annual Growth Survey is presented, and continue the debate following its adoption.</p>
<p>The EESC considers it a major shortcoming that in its Investment Plan, the Commission targets mainly private investment, largely ignoring the need for public investment.</p>	<p>The Investment Plan aims to generate at least 315 billion in additional public and private investment.</p> <p>The starting point is an EU Guarantee of EUR 16 billion, plus EUR 5 billion from the European Investment Bank. A number of countries have also already committed contributions through their national promotional banks. The Commission continues to call for more contributions to the plan, at different levels and has published further guidance which clarifies the status of public contributions from the perspective of the Stability and Growth Pact.</p>

<p>The EESC expresses support for the ongoing discussion in the European Commission on applying the financial golden rule.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to recall the guidance given on the investment clause in the Communication on making best use of flexibility within the existing rules of the Stability and Growth Pact of January 2015.</p>
<p>The EESC urges the Commission to step up the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion. Good practices in combating tax fraud and tax evasion should be promoted and shared in order to obtain more efficiency and justice.</p>	<p>The fight against tax avoidance and evasion is high on the agenda of the Commission's priorities. Two major deliverables have been included in the Commission's Work Programme 2015. Ensuring more tax transparency in the EU - a key condition for effectively combatting avoidance and evasion - was a first step. The second step, an Action Plan of measures on corporate taxation, is in preparation.</p>

<p>N°3 Economic governance review - Report on the application of Regulations (EU) N° 1173/2011, 1174/2011, 1175/2011, 1176/2011, 1177/2011, 472/2013 and 473/2013</p> <p>COM (2014) 905 final –EESC 2014/7288 - ECO/375</p> <p>506th Plenary Session - March 2015</p> <p>Rapporteur: Mr David CROUGHAN (GRI-IE)</p> <p>Co-rapporteur: Mr Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT)</p> <p>SG – Vice-President DOMBROVSKIS</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC is concerned that the cost has been high in terms of growth and employment, and that the European Union has lagged behind the rest of the advanced economies in exiting the economic crisis, pointing to policy failures largely due to the incomplete nature of economic governance in an economic and monetary union. The EESC considers that the European Central Bank cannot be left to combat the current recession in the euro area on its own.</p>	<p>In the Annual Growth Survey 2015, the Commission outlined the three main pillars of its new jobs and growth agenda: boosting investment, accelerating structural reforms and pursuing fiscal responsibility. Simultaneous action in all three areas is needed to restore confidence, reduce the uncertainty that is impeding recovery and to maximise the strong, mutually reinforcing effects of all three pillars working together. Together with other initiatives to complete the internal market, such as the Energy Union or the Digital Single Market, the Commission aims to promote growth and real economic convergence. To strengthen the link between structural reforms, investment and fiscal responsibility, the Commission also provided further guidance on the best possible use of the flexibility that is built into the existing rules of the Stability and Growth Pact.</p>
<p>The EESC is concerned that the structural balance, a non-observable variable based</p>	<p>The Commission stresses that the structural balance has the advantage</p>

<p>on theoretical and disputed calculations of the output gap and prone to serious revisions, plays such a key role in the preventive and corrective arms of the Excessive Deficit Procedure.</p>	<p>over the headline budget balance figure that it tries to approximate the extent to which developments in public finance variables are the result of policy actions by governments. However, next to application of structural deficit targets, the expenditure benchmark was introduced as a new element to provide clearer and more operational guidance to Member States. The Commission furthermore emphasises that the new economic governance rules have allowed a balance to be found between sustainability and cyclical stabilisation requirements.</p>
<p>The EESC expresses that the democratic deficit of unelected bodies having an important say in the governance runs the risk of low ownership of recommendations and hostility to the European project. A lack of implementation of CSRs could be countered by real involvement of civil society and the social partners in drawing up CSRs. The EP should have a strong role in establishing the economic priorities of each Semester and in the parliamentary oversight of CSRs. The Semester process should be more widely publicised by Member States and the Commission to ensure a better understanding by citizens.</p>	<p>The Commission proposes to streamline and reinforce the European Semester of economic policy coordination in support of the three pillars as outlined in the 2015 Annual Growth Survey. The aim of streamlining the Semester is to increase accountability and transparency of the process, to strengthen the credibility and comparability of analysis across Member States, to help improve the implementation of the country-specific recommendations and to increase political ownership, including through an improved role by the European Parliament, national parliaments, social partners and other stakeholders such as the Civil Society.</p>
<p>The EESC considers that economic governance (particularly of the euro area) can no longer be entrusted solely to the regulations currently under review. The EESC thus expresses that there is inter alia a need to back urgent structural reforms</p>	<p>The Commission would like to underline that the Political Guidelines for the new Commission already announced legislative and non-legislative initiatives to deepen EMU and would be launched in the first year</p>

<p>with a common EU interest, including macroeconomic rebalancing, with some form of fiscal capacity.</p>	<p>of the mandate. The President is coordinating a report on this topic which is expected to be presented to the European Council in June 2015.</p>
<p>The EESC asks the Commission to make ex-post assessments not only of the implementation of its policy recommendations by Member States, but also whether the recommendations effectively promoted the return of the economy to a sustainable path, not only in terms of financial and budgetary adjustments, but also in economic growth, development and the creation of high-quality jobs.</p>	<p>The Commission refers to its analysis of progress on the Europe 2020 strategy (COM(2014)130) as well as the analysis as published in the 2015 Annual Growth Survey (COM(2014) 902 final).</p>
<p>The EESC is greatly concerned by the one-sided approach to the correction of macroeconomic imbalances. Beyond a national perspective, to be addressed meaningfully, an assessment of imbalances and their impact on the Europe-wide economy is needed.</p>	<p>The Commission stresses that it has put increased attention on the aggregate euro area policy stance and on spill-overs in this year's assessment round.</p>
<p>The EESC calls for the Commission to carry out and publish a study on the outcomes of the adjustment programmes in the four countries.</p>	<p>The adjustment programmes have been the subject of regular monitoring for each of the countries in question. Moreover, the Commission recalls that the economic governance review, published in autumn 2014, provided additional elements of analysis.</p>
<p>The EESC asks that social indicators feature more prominently in the scoreboard and be used to regulate budget policies.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to recall that it has already ensured in recent years that employment and social considerations play a greater role in the broader macro-economic governance framework through the Alert Mechanism Report and the Joint Employment Report. Moreover,</p>

	<p>reinforcing the social and employment aspects of EMU is seen as an important part of the ongoing deepening EMU exercise. This effort is being accompanied by actions to reinvigorate social dialogue at all levels.</p>
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<p>N°4 Emission limits and type-approval for internal combustion engines for non-road mobile machinery COM (2014) 581 final - EESC-2014/6067 - INT/763 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Brendan BURNS (GRI-UK) DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Points 1.1 and 4.1 on the monitoring of "in service emission performance of engines" and the installation of PEMS systems</p>	<p>The Commission wishes to underline that the use of portable emissions measurements systems (PEMS) will be strictly limited to testing needs on a sample basis, hence not be implemented systematically and permanently on each non-road mobile machine. The feasibility of monitoring pollutant emissions through the use of PEMS will be assessed in the framework of the relevant pilot programmes.</p> <p>This includes, more particularly, the identification of the most appropriate measuring technique for the different engine power ranges, i.e. testing on a test bench for engines in the lower power range and use of PEMS for the bigger engines.</p>
<p>Points 1.2 and 4.2 on adoption in a rapid and timely manner of the NRMM Regulation and the introduction of Stage V.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees on the need for a timely adoption of the legislation and will endeavour to achieve this objective. In any case, the deadlines for the introduction of Stage V should be adapted to take into account the date of adoption, should there be any significant delay in the adoption of the</p>

	Regulation.
Point 3.5 on the technical issues to be considered during the adaptation process for NRMM engines.	The technical issues mentioned in Point 3.5 were considered during the drafting of the proposal text and will also be taken into due account when drafting the delegated and implementing acts for the Non-road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) Regulation.

<p>N°5 EU geographical indication/ non-agricultural products COM(2014) 469 final – EESC 2014/5991 - INT/760 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Ms Kathleen WALKER SHAW (GR11-UK) DG GROW – Commissioner BIEŃKOWSKA</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The EESC supports the extension of Geographical Indication (GI) protection to non-agricultural products through a unitary EU regulation;</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes this opinion of the EESC.</p>
<p>and recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - both the voluntary GI system and the mandatory origin marking on consumer products from the product safety package be supported; - as far as possible, the system follow the existing framework for agri/food products and guarantee the same level of protection and safeguards under TRIPS enjoyed by agri/food products; - GI and other intellectual property intensive companies be supported in protecting their products and know-how rather than in defensive legal action; - a formal registration process be set up, preferably publically funded and administered, free of charge and completed within a set timeframe; - a strong link between the product and place of origin be established; - the relationship between the GI system for 	<p>The Commission will take its recommendations into consideration when deciding on the way forward on this dossier.</p>

non-agricultural products and trademark law be defined in a similar way to that currently used for agricultural products.	
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<p>N°6 Freeing the EU from Asbestos (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/5005 – CCMI/130 505th Plenary Session – February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Aurel Laurențiu PLOSCEANU (GRI-RO) Co-rapporteur: Mr Enrico GIBELLIERI (GRIT-IT) DG EMPL – Commissioner THYSSEN</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Point 1.1.</p> <p>The total removal of all used asbestos and all asbestos containing products has to be a priority target of the European Union. Action plans are a matter for the Member States but the EU should coordinate. In this respect, the EESC encourages the EU to work with the social partners and other stakeholders at European, national and regional levels to develop and share action plans for asbestos removal and management. These plans should include: education and information; training for public employees; national and international training; programmes to fund asbestos removal; awareness-raising activities relating to the removal of asbestos and products containing asbestos (including during removal from buildings), public amenities and sites of former asbestos factories; cleaning premises and installations in buildings, for the destruction of asbestos and asbestos-containing debris; monitoring of the effectiveness of existing legal requirements; exposure assessments of at-</p>	<p>Without prejudice to the obligation of Member States to ensure compliance with the relevant EU environmental and EU Occupational Safety and Health (EU OSH) legislation, a decision about whether the removal of asbestos from private and public buildings is the most appropriate risk management measure depends on site-specific factors. Therefore, Member States, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, are better placed to design and implement such initiatives.</p> <p>In accordance with Article 153 (4) TFEU, the EU OSH directives adopted pursuant to the Social Policy title of the TFEU do not prevent Member States from maintaining or introducing more stringent protective measures compatible with the Treaties. Accordingly, Article 1 (2) of Directive 2009/148/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work¹ provides</p>

¹ OJ L 330, 16.12.2009, p. 28.

<p>risk personnel and health protection.</p>	<p>that that Directive shall not prejudice the right of Member States to apply or introduce national provisions ensuring greater protection for workers, in particular as regards the replacement of asbestos by less dangerous substitutes.</p>
<p>Point 1.4.</p> <p>The European Commission should consider opening access to its structural funds explicitly for asbestos removal plans.</p>	<p>The EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 encourages Member States to use the European Social Fund (ESF) and other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to finance actions relating to OSH. For the 2014-2020 programming period, ESF funding will be available to support actions aiming <i>inter alia</i> to promote sustainable, quality employment and social inclusion, including developing and implementing measures to tackle health determinants of occupational/environmental causes (e.g. exposure to toxic substances,) which are linked to diseases including cancer.</p> <p>The removal of asbestos can possibly be supported also from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) if linked to a concrete investment priority (listed in Article 5 of Regulation 1301/2013 on the ERDF and in Article 4 of Regulation 1300/2013 on the CF) and foreseen in the relevant national or regional Operational Programme.</p> <p>In addition, the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) will be used to support actions to promote cooperation,</p>

	communication and gathering of expertise in the area of OSH.
<p>Point 1.5.</p> <p>The European Commission is urged to undertake a study of existing national approaches and systems for the registration of asbestos as well as their financing.</p>	<p>In the current EU legislative context of a general asbestos ban and of Directive 2009/148/EC, workers' exposure to asbestos becomes a concern only when asbestos is present due to its former use e.g. as a construction material.</p> <p>In accordance with the principle "evaluate first", any concrete initiatives in relation to this request should be aligned with the results of the ongoing ex-post evaluation of the 24 EU OSH directives, including Directive 2009/148/EC, expected for end of 2015. This evaluation is carried out pursuant to Article 17a of Framework Directive 89/391/EEC¹ and is also part of the REFIT Programme.</p> <p>The Commission would like to highlight, at this stage, that in case of maintenance, renovation or demolition work, the provisions of Directive 2009/148/EC are fully applicable even if a previous screening of the concerned building was carried out. In this regard, Article 11 of the Directive requires employers, before beginning demolition or maintenance work, to take, if appropriate by obtaining information from the owners of the premises, all necessary steps to identify presumed asbestos-containing</p>

¹ : Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, OL 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1.

	<p>materials. In addition, any screening or register of buildings containing asbestos cannot be exhaustive in practical terms and could even provide a sense of false security. This is the reason why the provisions of Directive 2009/148/EC have to be respected in all cases.</p>
<p>Point 1.6.</p> <p>Landfills for asbestos waste are only a temporary solution to the problem, which is thus left to be dealt with by future generations, as asbestos fibres are virtually indestructible over time. Therefore, the EESC calls on the Commission to promote systems for destroying products that contain asbestos (systems such as plasma torches, pyrogasification, etc.), referring to the Best Available Techniques. Research and innovation should be promoted to implement sustainable technologies for the treatment and inertisation of waste containing asbestos with a view to their safe recycling, re-utilisation, and the reduction of their disposal in landfills. The Commission should provide for effective measures to avoid the hazardous practice of delivering asbestos waste to landfills that are foreseen for general building refuse.</p>	<p>The handling of asbestos with the purpose of reusing and recycling it seems to be problematic health wise and economically unviable. In such cases, it may be justified to divert from the waste hierarchy as set out in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC on Waste in order to allow its thermal treatment or disposal in landfills. In fact, there are strict requirements in the EU waste legislation (provision 2.3.3. of Council Decision 2003/33/EC) for the acceptance and disposal of asbestos in non-hazardous landfills.</p>
<p>Point 1.7.</p> <p>EU funding and Member State incentives targeting better energy efficiency in buildings should be linked with the safe removal of asbestos from those buildings. Whereas the EU has developed an ambitious policy for energy efficiency, and the revised Energy Efficiency Directive is expected to establish a long-term strategy in each</p>	<p>EU funding and Member State incentives targeting better energy performance of buildings could be linked to the safe removal of asbestos from those buildings as needed. The EU has developed an ambitious policy for energy efficiency and renovation of buildings. The Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU) requires the</p>

Member State for renovation of buildings, this policy is not combined with asbestos removal strategies. Such a combination, formulated in a consistent EU policy that integrates the relevant policy areas, is strongly recommended.

Any kind of action plan for the removal of asbestos needs to consider the qualifications of all stakeholders involved in the work/action. This concerns workers and companies, OSH coordinators as well as labour inspectors, advisers, trainers, employers and others. Certification of the capabilities of the companies to be involved in these action plans is highly needed and recommended.

Member States to establish a long-term strategy in each Member State for mobilising investment in the renovation of the national stock of residential and commercial buildings, both public and private. Building renovations resulting from EU policy in this area provide an opportunity to integrate asbestos removal in a way that prevents risks of asbestos contamination.

Any kind of action plan for the removal of asbestos needs to consider the qualifications of all stakeholders involved in the work/action as the cost to remove asbestos is high due to the required level of protection for workers and the waste management process. This concerns workers and companies, OSH coordinators as well as labour inspectors, advisers, trainers, employers and others. Certification of the capabilities of the companies to be involved in these action plans is highly needed and recommended. In accordance with Directive 2009/148/EC, before carrying out demolition or asbestos removal work, firms must provide evidence of their ability in this field, and that evidence is to be established in accordance with national laws and/or practice. BUILD UP Skills is a European initiative that aims at upskilling workers in the construction sector, as skills remain key to achieving highly energy performing buildings whether it is new buildings or in renovation of the existing building stock.

<p>Point 1.8.</p> <p>Safe removal is highly dependent on trained workers of two categories: those working in specialised companies, and those in professions and occupations who come into contact with asbestos accidentally.</p> <p>The EESC calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the national authorities, to provide the necessary support for actions and initiatives aiming at ensuring the protection of the entire EU workforce, given that small and medium enterprises, which employ most of the European workforce, are particularly exposed as regards the implementation of health and safety legislation. Sound training is crucial in this relation.</p>	<p>The Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 identifies specific actions to achieve the key objectives of improvement of implementation of OSH by micro and small enterprises as well as the better enforcement of EU legislation in this area.</p> <p>The possible difficulties in following the requirements of Directive 2009/148/EC by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the existence of specific measures taken by the Member State or the social partners to support SMEs in implementing the Directive are assessed in the ongoing ex-post evaluation of the EU OSH Directive, including Directive 2009/148/EC.</p>
<p>Point 1.9.</p> <p>(...) calls on the Commission to draw up, together with the social partners and other relevant stakeholders, programmes and awareness-raising activities on asbestos-related risks and the need for appropriate training for all staff likely to be affected by ACMs, in accordance with Article 14(1) of Directive 2009/148/EC, and to improve information about existing asbestos legislation and provide practical guides as to how to comply with it, including EU</p>	<p>Directive 2009/148/EC lays down specific minimum requirements concerning the protection of workers involved in asbestos removal work, including on training.</p> <p>In order to ensure the effectiveness of the EU OSH framework, including Directive 2009/148/EC, several actions have been carried out by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)¹ and the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC)². These</p>

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94 of 18 July 1994 establishing a European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, OJ L 216, 20.8.1994, p.1.

² Commission Decision of 12 July 1995 setting up a Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors (95/319/EC), as amended by Commission Decision of 22 October 2008 amending Decision 95/319/EC setting up a Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors.

<p>citizens.</p>	<p>have tried in particular to address the problem of exposure to asbestos of workers in the construction sector, as this seems to be the main group of concern.</p> <p>In accordance with Article 14 (3) of Directive 2009/148/EC, the Commission established Practical Guidelines for the information and training of workers involved with asbestos removal or maintenance work, available online¹. A practical guide on best practice to prevent or minimise asbestos risks has been established by SLIC and is available online².</p>
<p>Point 1.10.</p> <p>(...) the EESC urges the Commission to amend Recommendation 2003/670/EC to reflect the progress of medical research and to include cancers of the larynx and ovary as asbestos-related.</p>	<p>The "cancer of the larynx following the inhalation of asbestos dust" is listed in Annex II of Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC³ as a disease suspected of being occupational in origin which should be subject to notification and which may be considered at a later stage for inclusion in Annex I of the European schedule.</p> <p>Further to a study report submitted in early 2012^[2], which was followed by a conference on the topic^[3], the</p>

¹ https://osha.europa.eu/en/legislation/guidelines/exposure_chemical_agents/index_html/1/1/practical-guidelines-for-the-information-and-training-of-workers-involved-with-asbestos-removal-or-maintenance-work;

² <https://osha.europa.eu/data/links/a-practical-guide-on-best-practice-to-prevent-or-minimise-asbestos-risks>.

³ Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC of 19 September 2003 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, OJ L 238, 25.9.2003, p. 28.

[2] 'Report on the current situation in relation to occupational diseases' systems in EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries, in particular relative to Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC concerning the European Schedule of Occupational Diseases and gathering of data on relevant related aspects', at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=716&langId=en>.

[3] <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=940&furtherEvents=yes>.

	<p>Commission is considering adapting the Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC on the European schedule of occupational diseases to technical progress.</p>
<p>Point 1.11.</p> <p>It should be ensured that at Member State level all cases of asbestosis, mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases are registered by means of systematic data collection on occupational and non-occupational asbestos diseases, that pleural plaques are categorised and officially registered as an asbestos-related disease, and that reliable mapping of asbestos presence is ensured, with the assistance of dedicated observatories.</p>	<p>Article 21 of Directive 2009/148/EC requires Member States to keep a register of recognised cases of asbestosis and mesothelioma.</p> <p>In addition, Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC recommends that Member States progressively make their statistics on occupational diseases compatible with the European schedule, in accordance with the work being done on the system of harmonising European statistics on occupational diseases.</p> <p>Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC provides that the criteria for the recognition of each occupational disease shall be determined by the Member States in accordance with national law and practice.</p> <p>Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008¹ establishes a common framework for the systematic production of EU statistics on public health and health and safety at work, requiring Member States to supply statistics on, for example, accidents at work² and on occupational</p>

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, OJ L 354/70, 31.12.2008.

² As defined in Annex IV of the Regulation.

	<p>diseases and other work-related health problems and illnesses¹. Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 does not however allow for the collection of harmonized data at European level on occupational diseases and defines a case of occupational disease as "<i>recognised by the national authorities responsible for recognition of occupational diseases</i>".</p> <p>Given the complexity of the situation concerning data collection in occupational and work-related diseases and in line with the EU Strategic Framework, the Commission has very recently set up a group of experts to examine different options to improve the availability and comparability of data on occupational diseases at EU level and assess the feasibility of a simplified data transmission.</p>
<p>Point 1.12.1</p> <p>(...) indicates that the active role of victims in procedures for the recognition of asbestos-related diseases needs to be improved, via legal, financial and personal support, as well as via the organization of asbestos victims associations. To that effect, among others the EESC calls on the Commission to support conferences which provide asbestos victims' groups with professional advice, and which provide support for their members.</p>	<p>The determination of the procedure for the recognition of occupational diseases, and the compensation to be paid in relation to occupational diseases is a matter for which the Member States have sole competence.</p> <p>Thus the Commission is not intending to finance conferences in this area.</p>

¹ As defined in Annex V of the Regulation.

<p>Point 2.3.</p> <p>(...) indicates that market surveillance does not ensure asbestos-containing products are not imported into the European market, and calls for European-wide action against these products.</p>	<p>Commission Directive 1999/77/EC, currently incorporated in Annex XVII of Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006, bans the manufacture, placing on the market and use of asbestos fibres and of mixtures and articles containing them, with only extremely limited exemptions. Market surveillance, and the enforcement of provisions related to the ban on asbestos, is the sole responsibility of the enforcement authorities of Member States. It must be noted however that every year there are numerous notifications in RAPEX, related to imports of asbestos containing articles, which indicates enforcement does treat asbestos as a priority.</p>
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<p>N°7 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund, as regards an increase of the initial pre-financing amount paid to operational programmes supported by the Youth Employment Initiative COM(2015) 46 final – EESC 2015/1246 – SOC/522 506th Plenary Session - March 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Pavel TRANTINA (GRIII-CZ) DG EMPL – Commissioner THYSSEN</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.6 The EESC calls on the European Commission to closely monitor the challenges to the implementation of the YEI and especially to the Youth Guarantee. The monitoring process should not only be based on quantitative analysis but also on more qualitative indicators.</p>	<p>The Commission has specific obligations to monitor and report on Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) implementation as laid down in Article 19 of the ESF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013). Furthermore, in the course of 2015 the Commission intends to also collect qualitative information from the Member States as regards the key measures they support with YEI funding and publish a report.</p> <p>Thorough and regular monitoring is of utmost importance for the successful implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes. The Commission draws on the Indicators Framework developed by the Employment Committee for this purpose, and for which first pilot data was already collected at the beginning of 2015, with regular data collection due to be launched later in 2015.</p> <p>The Commission is also monitoring the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the framework of the</p>

	<p>European Semester, with a focus on more qualitative aspects such as the quality of employment, with particular attention being paid to school-to-work transitions and issues related to labour market segmentation.</p>
<p>3.4.4 The YEI should not prevent Member States from using the European Social Fund to finance broader projects related to youth, especially on poverty and social inclusion. The EESC calls on the European Commission to monitor the use of ESF funds for youth-related projects.</p>	<p>The Commission has specific obligations to monitor and report on ESF implementation as laid down in Article 53 of the Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013).</p> <p>The report envisaged to be published by the Commission in 2015 (Article 16(3) CPR) will for the first time include a dedicated section on the use of YEI and ESF as stipulated in the Operational programmes. Subsequent monitoring by the Commission of the use of ESF and YEI resources for young people will be ensured through the follow-up of Annual Implementation Reports and Member State evaluations. The Commission also actively participates in the Monitoring Committee meetings and it also chairs Annual Review Meetings with the ESF Managing Authorities where the allocations to youth employment actions are regularly discussed.</p>
<p>3.6.1 The EESC calls on the European Commission to closely monitor the challenges to the implementation of the YEI and especially to the Youth Guarantee, that have been identified in the 2014 Country-Specific Recommendations regarding the quality of offers, the lack of</p>	<p>While the YEI directly supports the implementation of the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR), the thrust of structural reform measures as regards Public Employment Services (PES) capacity and outreach activities is expected to be supported by the ESF</p>

<p>active outreach to NEETs, the administrative capacity of public employment services and the lack of effective engagement with all the relevant partners.</p>	<p>allocations under a range of investment priorities. In the context of YEI, the quality of employment offers financed is expected to be evaluated by the Member States as laid down in Article 19(4) of the ESF Regulation. The Commission has produced detailed guidance on the content and evaluation questions for the purpose of YEI evaluation which is available to the Member States.</p> <p>The Commission monitors the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes within the European Semester, including the multilateral surveillance through the Employment Committee and the issuing of country-specific recommendations to Member States, where appropriate. The 2015 Commission country reports (available at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm) follow up on the challenges identified in 2014.</p>
<p>3.6.2 The monitoring process should not only be based on quantitative analysis but also on more qualitative indicators. This would make it possible not only to identify the measures that would not be efficient to bring young people into employment but also to identify the reasons for the failures of such measures.</p>	<p>The Commission supports this view and intends to also look into qualitative elements when preparing the reports on the YEI in the context of Article 19 ESF and Article 53 CPR, as referred to above, and the report to the European Parliament and the Council on the Youth Guarantee implementation in 2016.</p>
<p>3.7.1 The Youth Employment Initiative gives Member States the possibility to extend the policy measures to young people</p>	<p>Article 16 ESF provides for the Member States to extend the age range of the YEI target group to below 30</p>

up to the age of 30. Member States should take into account this possibility when monitoring and evaluating the YEI in their country.

years of age. However, in view of the limited resources for YEI to play a significant role in terms of policy results, The Commission's guidance documents on the YEI encourage Member States to reflect carefully on; and give reasons for; the age range selected for the YEI target group in their operational programmes to ensure that the support is concentrated on those most affected. This allows YEI funding to have maximum impact. Furthermore, Operational Programmes must determine the age range for support from the YEI and set the relevant performance targets and indicators. If a change in the age range is contemplated after an Operational programme is adopted, all relevant sections in the programme need to be formally amended.

<p>N°8 Proposal to map macro-regional strategies across Europe (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/2544 - ECO/362 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Ms Etele BARÁTH (GR11-HU) DG REGIO – Commissioner CREȚU</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the opinion of the EESC whereby it underlines the potentials macroregional strategies can offer across Europe, in particular as regards territorial cohesion, economic and social development, as well as multilevel governance. The conclusions and recommendations presented do not invite any specific comment. The Commission would only like to remind of the prerequisites and conditions any macroregional strategy should comply with to ensure successful implementation and outcomes, as stated in the Commission reports concerning the added value of macroregional strategies adopted on 27 June 2013 (COM(2013)468 final) and concerning the governance of macroregional strategies adopted on 20 May 2014 (COM(2014)284 final).</p>

<p>N°9 Smart Islands (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/5752 – TEN/558 506th Plenary Session - March 2015 Rapporteur: Ms Anna Maria DARMANIN (GRIL-MT) DG REGIO – Commissioner CREȚU</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>– In the context of the development and implementation of smart and sustainable development policies, the specific features of islands, particularly in terms of their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, should also be taken into account. Policies and initiatives should therefore ensure the appropriate mainstreaming of climate change adaptation measures in order to ensure that islands build and strengthen climate resilience in all areas of their economies.</p>	<p>The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in all Member States and regions. In their overall approach to promoting EU2020 objectives, the Member States concerned must take into account the specific challenges of the island regions. Coordination and synergies between EU policy instruments are exploited, for example with LIFE (in particular with integrated projects in the areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience to the impact of climate change and natural disasters, and adoption of related innovative technologies). Member States and Managing Authorities are requested in all phases of implementation to ensure full mainstreaming of sustainable development into the European Structural and Investment Funds and that climate change vulnerabilities and impacts are reflected in the programmes.</p> <p>The resilient Energy Union framework strategy is reinforcing the shift to a low-carbon and climate-friendly economy with a more cohesive set of measures across policy areas, at EU and national</p>

	levels.
<p>– Smart Policies for Smart Islands would include an "Island Test", whereby any EU policy would be tested as to its effect on islands and proper consideration given to the island dimension. The EESC calls on the Commission to implement Island Tests across all DGs.</p>	<p>Before defining future policies, the Commission analyses a wide range of alternative policy options and assesses their economic, social and environmental impacts through its integrated impact assessment system. If a new policy initiative has significant territorial impacts, the assessment process takes this into account. Moreover, stakeholder consultations allow all interested parties to express their views on all key aspects of impact assessments - including the analysis of relevant impacts.</p> <p>The recently adopted 'Better Regulation Package' further strengthens involvement of all stakeholders in policy development and provides details about the methodology used to assess territorial impacts.</p>
<p>– European islands are sometimes at a disadvantage compared with the European mainland due to their isolation and peripheral nature. However, geography brings great advantages as well as disadvantages, and at the current time, islands are also offering immense potential for growth and development, not only for themselves but also for Europe as a whole. This is why the EESC is calling for smart policies and smart development initiatives at EU, national and regional levels that also cater for the specific characteristics of islands. Nevertheless, responsibility for smart policies in islands should be shared between all the aforementioned levels and not fall exclusively to one category. In view of</p>	<p>In their strategic analysis, planning and overall approach to promoting smart and sustainable development through ESIF programmes, the Member States must take into account the relevant geographical specificities, including specific challenges of islands.</p> <p>The Commission has set up an Expert Group on Urban and Territorial Matters (EGTCUM) which discusses various aspects of territorial dimension, including those concerning islands. The Commission is in favour of making the best possible use of existing networks and expert groups rather than creating new ones.</p>

this shared responsibility, but not exclusively due to this, the EESC calls for an expert group on islands that would oversee policy and its applicability and effect on islands. Furthermore, the EESC recommends that an open platform for islands be established, to act as a forum for coordination and action among islands in relation to the Smart Islands objectives.

<p>1.4 The EESC proposes a whole series of smart policy recommendations with a view to boosting smart islands, each of which is explained and described in detail in points 4 to 11 below. They relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the digital agenda: investment in infrastructure, completion of the single market and investment in R&D; - energy supply: islands as test beds for ocean, tidal, wave, solar and wind energy; and the combination of these technologies; - urban mobility and transport: H2020 and Interreg having programmes targeted at maritime transport and urban mobility with a view to sustainability in islands; combining state aid with sustainable transport; - maritime policy: maritime surveillance; R&D in sea mining and oceanography using islands as research centres; impact assessment of islands on maritime policy; role of islands in maritime policy; - trade in goods and services: best practices of niche trade; adaptation of policy conducive to niche trade on islands; open laboratories for economic and social development in islands; - tourism: accessibility; specificities of the nature of - tourism and impacts of tourism; 	<p>Recommendations involve EU policy priorities which - in addition to the sectoral policies and research funding - are promoted through the ESIF strategic and multiannual programming and which the Member States can use for targeting these investments to specific needs, including those of islands.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - water management: policy with specific characteristics unique to islands; and lastly - education, training and lifelong learning. 	
<p>Furthermore, the EESC recommends that an open platform for islands be established, to act as a forum for coordination and action among islands in relation to the Smart Islands objectives.</p>	<p>The Commission is in favour of efficient use of existing EU level policy coordination platforms and networks for dialogue.</p> <p>There are multiple stakeholder networks in this field since islands and their circumstances vary from small islands or island regions to island Member States, and from remote location to being close to main markets.</p>

<p>N°10 Communication from the Commission on the EU Strategy and Action Plan for customs risk management: Tackling risks, strengthening supply chain security and facilitating trade COM(2014) 527 final – EESC 2014/6021 – INT/761 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER (GRIII-ES) Co-rapporteur: Mr Jan SIMONS (GRI-NL) DG TAXUD– Commissioner MOSCOVICI</p>	
Points of the EESC opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1.1. The EESC welcomes the Commission communication on the Strategy and Action Plan for Customs Risk Management. To ensure that the strategy is properly implemented, customs authorities should work together, but also with other government authorities (such as health and consumer services, and security services through judicial cooperation).</p> <p>For the EESC, the important thing is to ensure effective implementation of the European Union's customs rules and the proper functioning of the cooperation mechanisms provided for by EU law.</p>	<p>The Commission thanks the EESC for its broad support to its initiative.</p>
<p>1.2. To ensure integrated customs risk management, it is also necessary to harmonise implementation of other policies and make it coherent. As Member States already have official data on these subjects, this information needs to be pooled and shared, particularly by making the official data on serious risks interoperable.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees on the need to ensure complementarity of roles between customs and other competent authorities in implementing supply chain risk management. This will be addressed by developing further the cooperation arrangements and improving the accessibility and sharing of risk information among authorities.</p>
<p>1.3. When adopting its own roles and supplementing its framework, the EU should</p>	<p>The Commission believes that EU customs rules should respect WCO</p>

<p>take as a basis the rules of the Risk Management Compendium and other standards of the World Customs Organisation (WCO), to ensure that its customs rules are in line with the majority of the existing provisions governing the matter.</p>	<p>standards but also that the EU needs to actively participate in the further development of global standards and norms in relevant multilateral fora to improve global supply chain risk management.</p>
<p>1.4. Under Objective 3 of the Action Plan, it must be clearly determined by whom, when and where controls are to be carried out, in accordance with the definition of risks and levels of risk which it is to be hoped the Commission will adopt as an implementing measure. Given the importance of this, we consider that it should be the priority action to be implemented.</p>	<p>Objective 3 aims to ensure that risk based controls and mitigation measures are carried out at the most appropriate time and place in the supply chain to optimally address the risk while taking account of constraints of the logistics chain and resource efficiency. This is viewed as a priority but cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be progressed in parallel with other objectives and actions which are interdependent. While the underlying principles are clearly set out in the strategy, progress on other objectives will also be determining factors. These include strengthened capacities, enabling submission of high quality data from economic operators, ensuring its appropriate availability in Member States for risk mitigation and appropriate cooperation, information sharing and coordination between customs authorities and with other agencies.</p>
<p>1.5. As ensuring uniform implementation of EU customs rules is a priority, Objective 5 of the Action Plan is also of great importance as the whole strategy is based on promoting cooperation between national authorities on all types of implementation and detection and exchange of information between national and EU administrations.</p>	<p>See under 1.2 and 1.4 above</p>

<p>1.6. The EESC emphasises that when the strategy is defined, account must be taken of the distinctive features of customs practice in the Member States — such as the size of the relevant trade flows, volumes and practices — while these systems must be compatible and respect EU principles and legislation.</p>	<p>Volumes of trade to be risk assessed vary according to geographical location and the nature of supply chain logistics. The range of risks is broad and threats may also vary according to time and place. The Commission agrees these factors must be taken account of but also recognises the mutual reliance of Member States given the EU single market and customs union and the transnational dimension of threats. There is thus also a need to ensure customs tackles risks consistently throughout the EU in line with the principles set out.</p> <p>See also under 1.2</p>
<p>1.7. The EESC endorses the importance given in the communication to cooperation between the Commission and Member States, but would also like to stress the importance of other social stakeholders involved in the strategy and the role they can play.</p>	<p>The Commission also considers the need for enhanced cooperation with the trading community an important element of the strategy (objective 6).</p>
<p>1.8. Although the communication implies this without dealing directly with the issue, the Committee calls for greater visibility for pilot projects on the ground, in order to encourage stakeholders to play a greater role and thus foster additional private investment that would further the communication's strategy by boosting innovation.</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the wish for greater visibility for pilot projects.</p>
<p>5.2 The strategy does not mention the risk of fraud in the information or the possibility of “taking advantage of” a good reputation (“identity tag”). Risk management should allow customs authorities to detect fraudulent information and abuse of a good</p>	<p>This issue has been specifically referenced in the 2013 Communication on customs risk management and security of the supply chain (COM (2012) 793 final), the precursor to the strategy. It is considered an element</p>

<p>reputation in order to prevent counterfeit and dangerous products being imported.</p>	<p>inherent to the risk assessment process and fully consistent with the strategy, notably the drive for high quality and reliable data, partnerships with legitimate operators, common risk criteria and broader more systematic sharing of information.</p>
<p>5.4 The EESC regrets that the Commission strategy only provides for cooperation between Member States and the Commission, ignoring the recommendations made in previous opinions regarding the need to provide for cooperation with economic operators.</p>	<p>This seems to be a misunderstanding. The strategy includes specific objectives for enhanced cooperation with economic operators and to tap the potential of customs cooperation between the EU and international trading partners.</p>

<p>N°11 European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS) – Review COM(2014) 508 final; COM(2014) 509 final - EESC-2014/5561 – ECO/373 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Carmelo CEDRONE (GRII-IT) DG FISMA – Commissioner HILL</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The Committee agrees with the Commission on the need for corrective action to improve the operation of the European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS). It is of the utmost importance that the new supervisory and regulatory set-up be equipped to secure the stability of the financial system and growth.</p> <p>The EESC therefore puts forward the following proposals in the areas of:</p> <p>1.10.1 Single Market: promotion of measures to facilitate coordination between the ESFS, the new SSM arrangement and the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM), to foster the development of an efficient and effective European system of supervision.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the support expressed by the EESC for the Commission reports of August 2014 on the functioning and the performance of the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) and the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB).</p> <p>The Commission agrees that the establishment of a Banking Union and notably of the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) and the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) as key components will impact the functioning of the ESFS and will have to be taken into account when considering legislative initiatives amending the current system.</p>
<p>1.10.2 Simplification, transparency and effectiveness: rationalisation of the regulatory functions of the ESFS institutions with a view to simplifying the regulatory framework and making procedures more transparent and effective.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that transparent, inclusive and efficient regulatory processes are crucial. The ESAs are set up as decentralised agencies and their role in the regulatory process therefore has to be assessed within the limits posed by the Treaty.</p>
<p>1.10.3 Governance: promotion of a medium-term strategy designed to bring</p>	<p>The Commission identified improved governance arrangements of the ESAs</p>

<p>about a process of organisational and functional consolidation on the part of the supervisors, which could make economies of scale and scope by considering the possibility of a single seat and the adoption of a twin peaks model.</p>	<p>as one of the main areas for possible improvements in the medium-term. The Commission will continue its reflection and further assess in the medium- to long-term the need for possible changes.</p>
<p>1.10.4 EMU: promotion of mechanisms to support the priorities of the eurozone countries with particular reference to the banking market and single supervisory mechanisms that make specific provision for membership of non-eurozone countries.</p>	<p>The ESFS encompasses all 28 Member States, and its overall objective is to sustainably reinforce the stability and effectiveness of the financial system throughout the EU. By preparing uniform standards and ensuring supervisory convergence, the ESAs actively contribute to the functioning of the Single Market to the benefit of all Member States, including those participating in the EMU.</p>
<p>1.10.5 The EESC considers that, on the basis of the pointers set out in its opinion:</p> <p>a) the ESRB's Advisory Scientific Committee and relevant ESA committees or expert groups - having obtained the opinion of the stakeholder groups - should waste no time in making specific proposals for improvement;</p>	<p>The ESRB contributed to the ESFS Review by way of a report prepared by a High-Level Group including Professor André Sapir, the former Chair of the ESRB Advisory Scientific Committee in July 2013. The contribution was taken into account in the Commission report.</p>
<p>b) in parallel, the European Commission should assess the feasibility of more structural measures regarding the organisation of the ESFS and the authorities' funding mechanisms.</p>	<p>As regards the ESAs, the Commission will continue its reflection and further assess in the medium- to long-term the need for additional changes.</p> <p>One of the objectives identified by President Juncker is to eliminate EU and national budgetary contributions to the ESAs.</p> <p>As regards the ESRB, the Commission services are currently assessing in detail</p>

	<p>possible options for addressing the issues identified in the report, to the extent these may require legislative action, including the ESRB's organisational identity and internal governance.</p>
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<p>N°12 The role of cooperative and savings banks in territorial cohesion (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/4516 - ECO/371 505th Plenary Session - February 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Carlos TRIAS PINTÓ (GR11-ES) DG FISMA – Commissioner HILL</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 In the transition to new banking and non-banking business models in the finance sector, the EESC considers it vital to preserve the "biodiversity" of the financial system, without this meaning the arbitrary application of rules.</p>	<p>The European Commission acknowledges the benefits of a diverse banking sector and strives to ensure a level playing field where the business model of cooperative and savings banks is neither punished nor favoured.</p>
<p>1.4. However, the main problem remains the proper application of the proportionality principle in the new banking rules (especially regarding the Capital Requirements Directive - CRD IV and the Capital Requirements Regulation - CRR), which the Basel Committee suggested should be applied proportionately in keeping with the EU Treaties. This means that the strictest requirements should apply to global banks, stringent requirements should apply to pan-European banks (of a systemic nature in Europe) and more flexible requirements should apply to national and local banks (guaranteeing a proper level of consumer protection).</p>	<p>The European Commission takes good note of the EESC's view that the proportionality principle has not been applied sufficiently. However, the European Commission would like to draw the EESC's attention to recital 46 of the CRR, agreed to by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission which states: "The provisions of this Regulation respect the principle of proportionality, having regard in particular to the diversity in size and scale of operations and to the range of activities of institutions."</p> <p>The European Commission believes that there are many examples where proportionality has been enshrined in the rules by laying down additional capital requirement for systemically important banks, simplified methods of</p>

	<p>risk measurement or special rules for decentralised banking structures, to name just a few. Nevertheless, the European Commission will continue to carefully consider the cost of future regulation and to assess the impact of regulation already passed. While the rules suggested by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision serve an important purpose by staking out common ground among supervisors at international level, the European Commission will continue to ensure that any rules set out in law take full account of the economic realities within the Union.</p>
<p>1.7 The EESC stresses the dramatic impact which continued stagnation and lack of credit for SMEs and households may have on the European Union's future. It also echoes the recent criticism by the European Parliament of the Basel Committee's position, which had questioned the specific European instruments for financing SMEs.</p>	<p>The European Commission supports the aim of improving financing conditions for SMEs and households. The current banking regulation contains a discount factor which reduces capital requirements for SME loans. While the primary focus of financial regulation has to safeguard financial stability, the European Commission will pay attention in particular to the economic situation of SMEs, which form the backbone of the Union's economy.</p>

<p>N°13 European cooperation on energy networks (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/6650 – TEN/564 506th Plenary session - March 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Jean COULON (GR11-FR) DG ENER – Commissioner ARIAS CAÑETE</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Enhanced European cooperation on energy networks is essential for the general public and businesses.</p>	<p>In view of creating a resilient Energy Union, Member States must coordinate and cooperate with their neighbours when developing their energy policies. Enhanced regional cooperation within a common EU framework is one of the pillars of the Energy Union and also represents the basis for the implementation of the TEN-E Regulation (Regulation No 347/2013). The Regulation establishes guidelines for the development of trans-European networks mainly in electricity and gas, and addresses challenges from a European but also regional perspective.</p> <p>The regional approach acknowledges that integrated systems across borders are specific to the circumstances Member States find themselves in. Therefore, more cohesive and economic multi-state systems cannot be imposed from above, but must grow out of regional cooperation between Member States. The TEN-E Regulation and the Projects of Common Interest (PCI) process have been addressing this reality through the establishment of priority corridors and the activity of the Regional Groups.</p> <p>Answering to the specificities of certain</p>

	<p>regions in terms of energy priorities and challenges, regional high level groups were also created. Successes in specific regions, such as the positive developments within the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) initiative will act as a catalyst for other regions (Iberian Peninsula, Central and South Eastern Europe). The European Commission will ensure that all regional initiatives evolve in a coherent way and lead towards a fully integrated Single Energy Market.</p>
<p>The Energy Infrastructure Forum should provide for broad civil society consultation.</p>	<p>The Energy Infrastructure Forum will provide for a setting to discuss the development and implementation of energy infrastructure and PCIs. Relevant stakeholders will be invited to take part in the discussion.</p> <p>Moreover, the European Commission has acknowledged the importance of building a strong dialogue with stakeholders and of ensuring that local communities have access to information in an open and transparent way. In this respect, one of the initiatives of the Commission was to carry out a study on a “European Strategy for raising public acceptance of grid infrastructure development”. As a result, an online toolkit for project communication and stakeholder integration in the context of power grid development projects was developed. The project was governed by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee (TSOs, NGOs, DG Energy etc.). The toolkit includes detailed descriptions of different communication and engagement elements, including</p>

	<p>relevant stakeholders, information on different project planning stages, communication channels and formats and good practice examples. It is intended to be used by all actors involved in grid development projects, such as TSOs, public authorities, NGOs or citizen action groups who would like to inform themselves about their opportunities to engage in the process and be updated accordingly.</p>
<p>A "European Energy Savings Account" could be introduced in order to tap funding for European energy projects to supplement public or private funding.</p>	<p>The European Commission takes note of the idea and will study its feasibility.</p>
<p>Importance of decentralised electricity generation from renewables is emphasized. A special focus has to be given to the management of the electricity system.</p>	<p>The TEN-E Regulation emphasized the importance of ensuring electricity systems are operated in a reliable manner, as well as the need for working towards a coordinated approach at regional and potentially European level. The European Network of Transmission System Operators (ENTSO-E) is currently developing, and plans include specifications on common network operation tools to ensure coordination of network operation in normal and emergency conditions. ENTSO-E has already started working to meet the requirements. If needed, the European Commission may adopt guidelines on the implementation of operational coordination between transmission system operators at Union level.</p>
<p>Importance of electricity storages is emphasized.</p>	<p>Electricity storages can be essential in reducing the need to curtail intermittent renewables, increasing thus the maximum share of renewables, while</p>

	<p>ensuring the stability and the security of our electricity systems. Electricity storage facilities have been acknowledged as playing an increasingly important role in the European energy infrastructure and since 2013 represent one of the infrastructure categories which are eligible to receive the status of Projects of Common Interest under the TEN-E Regulation. As energy storages will play a key role in enabling the EU to develop a low-carbon electricity system, they are also one of the categories of focus for research under the Horizon 2020 programme.</p>
<p>Regulation of energy consumption and load management.</p>	<p>As part of the market design review – envisaged in the “Roadmap for the Energy Union”, the Commission will ensure that energy efficiency and demand side response can compete on equal terms with generation capacity.</p> <p>In this context, smart grid solutions can play an essential role for load management and also for tomorrow's energy system as a whole. Smart metering will unlock the potential of demand side flexibility and provide the information and tools to consumers to become active players in the energy market. Since the establishment of its Smart Grids Task Force, the European Commission has worked closely with stakeholders, including DSOs, TSOs and regulators, on key areas such as standardisation, data protection, regulatory issues and investments, for accelerating the deployment of smart grids. Smart Grid projects which integrate renewables, make the grid</p>

	<p>more flexible and which focus on the cooperation between transmission and distribution system operators in medium-voltage and high-voltage grid are supported under the TEN-E Regulation and may be eligible for financial support for works under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Smart Grid projects may also profit from funding via Horizon 2020 and the Cohesion Fund.</p>
<p>An urgent need to devise a new model to guarantee security of electricity supply.</p>	<p>The “Roadmap for the Energy Union” envisages the revision of the Security of Supply directives, both in the electricity and gas sectors. The drafting and adoption of a Regulation replacing Directive 2005/89/EC concerning measures to safeguard security of electricity supply and infrastructure investment is planned for the time interval 2015-2016.</p>

<p>N°14 The current system guaranteeing food safety and security of the food supply in the EU and ways to improve it (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/2479 - NAT/633 506th Plenary Session - March 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Igor SAMÍR (GRI-SK) DG SANTE – Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Statutory studies submitted by manufacturers [to EFSA], which must prove that the product concerned is harmless, are not published in scientific journals and not only does the scientific community not have routine access to the raw data from these studies, but trade secrecy has been overtly invoked in several cases. The EESC is convinced that this is not legally sound, since, according to the EFSA itself, data from statutory studies is not of a confidential nature (point 1.3).</p> <p>The EESC calls on the European Commission to start making appropriate changes to the rules on this matter, making it compulsory for the statutory studies concerned and the raw data from these studies to be disclosed on the EFSA’s website as a matter of routine, once it has completed its assessment (point 1.4).</p>	<p>The current legislative framework [Articles 38 par. c) and 39 of Regulation EU No 178/2002 in combination with provisions foreseen in sector-based legislation] already allows for the disclosure of non-confidential scientific data and information submitted by manufacturers.</p> <p>The Commission considers that the publication on the EFSA's website is a component of its autonomous policy on transparency. EFSA already proactively submits to public consultation a number of draft scientific outputs. This approach is currently being refined with the launch of the “Open Risk Assessment” process. One of the main objectives of this new initiative is that the information and data EFSA makes available are in a format that allows people to reuse them in order to reproduce and verify EFSA’s outputs. EFSA remains duty-bound to respect legal provisions safeguarding confidential information on personal, regulatory data when disclosing</p>

	documents.
<p>The EESC recommends that the European Commission draw up, after consulting endocrinologists, a list of products that may have a negative impact on the development of the endocrine system. The EESC urges the European Commission to apply the precautionary principle to substances on this list, pending a consensus within the scientific community on whether they pose a hormonal risk or are harmless (point 1.10).</p>	<p>The 7th Environmental Action Plan adopted in 2013 Parliament and Council states that the EU shall develop harmonised hazard-based criteria to identify endocrine disruptors. Pending the decision of setting these criteria, protective interim criteria are in place and they apply to authorisation decisions for plant protection products, biocides and industrial chemicals. A roadmap was published in June 2014 to explain the intentions of the Commission. An impact assessment is ongoing and should be completed by the end of 2016. The endocrine disruptors issue is among DG SANTE priorities for the current Commission mandate.</p>
<p>The importation of pests and diseases from third countries can have dramatic consequences for producers and consumers in the European Union. Stronger border controls, application of the reciprocity principle and a political willingness on the part of the European authorities are vital if the system's consistency is to be guaranteed (point 1.11).</p> <p>The EU must ensure that it can rely on a trade system that does not undermine food safety guarantees for Europeans (point 1.12).</p>	<p>The concerns raised by the EESC are addressed by the proposals on plant health and animal health currently under discussion by Council and Parliament. The EESC already issued its opinions on the proposals. The proposals shall ensure preventive, pro-active and strengthened protection of the EU against pests of plants, through, <i>inter alia</i>, the full use of the internationally agreed phytosanitary instruments under the International Plant Protection Convention. The adoption of the plant and animal health proposals is among DG SANTE priorities for the current Commission mandate.</p>

The EESC calls for foods to be made fully traceable "from farm to fork" (including imported foods) so that consumers are able to select foods of a certain quality and which meet current EU safety standards.

Article 18 of Regulation EU No 178/2002 provides for the traceability of food, feed, food-producing animals and any other substance intended to be, or expected to be, incorporated into a food or feed. The Commission is currently performing a fitness check of Regulation 178/2002 and a report summarising the fitness for purpose of this Regulation and providing for improvements where needed is foreseen by end of 2015.

<p>N°15 An Investment Plan for Europe COM(2014) 903 final and COM(2015) 10 final – EESC 2014/7287 - ECO/374 506th Plenary Session - March 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Michael SMYTH (GRIII-UK) DG ECFIN – Commissioner MOSCOVICI</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>Recommendation 1.3 :</p> <p>There is uncertainty about whether a pipeline of projects can be developed that offer returns that attract institutional investors. The EESC regrets that the European Commission has not adhered to the principles of its own Regulation 1303/2013 (Art. 5), developed further in Regulation 240/2014, in the current proposal and strongly recommends involving the social partners and organised civil society in the identification process at national level. This failure to involve the stakeholders in the ownership of proposals is evident in the December list of potential projects.</p>	<p>The December list was a quick exercise carried out by a dedicated small Task Force. Its purpose was to rapidly collect potential projects to demonstrate that it was not the absence of investment demand that created the investment gap. As such, it was without prejudice to those projects being financed or not in the framework of the Investment Plan.</p> <p>A portal of European investment projects will be created under Article 15 of the new Regulation on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Projects Portal (the EFSI Regulation). The portal is primarily intended to create visibility for European investment projects and for information purposes. The verification of the Commission, and potentially Member States, will be limited to projects' compatibility with applicable legislation, while potential investors will be expected to carry out their own due diligence (be it on financial, social or other aspects).</p>

<p>Recommendation 1.5 :</p> <p>The Plan proposes that contributions to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) from Member States will not be included in budget deficit calculations and this is to be welcomed. The Commission should explain why ongoing strategic public infrastructure expenditures are not treated in the same way. What is the difference between a favourable budgetary treatment of Member States' contributions to productive investments under EFSI and a full-blown Golden Rule?</p>	<p>The application of a general "Golden Rule" would fall outside the scope of the proposal and relates to the Stability and Growth Pact.</p> <p>The Commission has confirmed in its Communication of 13 January 2015 (COM(2015) 12) that it does not intend to introduce any such Golden Rule (the notion of "golden rule" is often discussed, for instance in the academia, but there are various definitions and interpretations).</p>
<p>Recommendation 1.7 :</p> <p>The EESC calls on the Commission to take into consideration the ILO recommendations on focusing on attracting viable projects from the regions with the highest unemployment rates, with the active involvement of the national social partners and stakeholders. The EESC recommends that the macro-regional strategies are taken into consideration when identifying and assessing potential projects.</p>	<p>The Commission in general opposes constraints or quotas based on the geographical location of the project considered. This would run counter to the market logic with which private co-investors would approach proposed projects and hence on the effectiveness of the initiative to generate around EUR 255 billion in private investments. The macroeconomic impact of the EFSI, including its impact on growth and employment, will also be an element that will be assessed in the review that the Commission will have to produce within three years from the entry into force of the Regulation.</p>

<p>N°16 Role for sustainable development and civil society involvement in stand-alone EU investment agreements with third countries (own-initiative opinion) EESC 2014/4461 – REX/410 506th Plenary Session – March 2015 Rapporteur: Mr Jonathan PEEL (GRI-UK) DG TRADE – Commissioner MALMSTRÖM</p>	
<p>Points of the EESC opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>1.1 The EU is also undertaking two separate negotiations for stand-alone Investment Agreements, and more may follow. The Committee considers it essential that these agreements should also contain a sustainable development chapter with an appropriate mechanism enabling civil society involvement.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the Committee's views on the importance of addressing sustainable development aspects of relevance in an investment context and interaction with civil society in the EU Investment Agreements. The Commission aims at including provisions in these areas in the Investment Agreements currently under negotiation.</p>
<p>1.2/1.2.1 [...] the formal inclusion of civil society involvement will demand greater effort. In an FTA, such as the one with Korea, many joint Committees are set up, but an Investment Agreement will have very few. Greater ingenuity to involve direct civil society input will therefore be required.</p> <p>6.3.1/2 The Committee should be included in finding solutions. We therefore recommend that an extension of the principle of the EU–China Round Table, on which the Committee and the China Economic and Social Council are equally represented, or another dialogue mechanism tailored for the relevant country-specific social circumstances,</p>	<p>The Commission agrees on the need to find an appropriate way to interact with civil society in Investment Agreements, and in this respect intends to include in the Investment Agreements currently under negotiation appropriate provisions with a view to involving a balanced representation of economic, environmental and social interests in the work of the mechanisms overseeing the said agreements.</p>

<p>should offer the best way forward.</p> <p>Alternatively, a way forward may be found through the Commission's considerable experience of capacity building programmes in trade and trade related issues.</p>	
<p>1.6.1 The Committee strongly recommends that the Commission pay particular attention to supporting SMEs and more specialist companies in investment matters as elsewhere. These companies are prime instigators in innovation which is particularly important to maintain and develop sustainability; they make up 99% of the economic fabric in the EU and also create 70-80% of employment.</p>	<p>Investment protection agreements represent a solid set of legal guarantees given by the host States, which greatly diminish the risks taken by EU investors. Thus, a typical investment agreement will protect investors against arbitrary measures being taken against them, will ensure that expropriation happens only for a public purpose, under due process and against fair compensation, and will guarantee that investors can freely repatriate their capitals and returns. This benefits in particular SMEs, which, especially in their ventures abroad, can be more vulnerable. Moreover, the EU is introducing important improvements in search of greater clarity and predictability in these agreements (e.g. general standard of treatment, expropriation), and also a reduction of the arbitration costs in case of dispute (see for instance provisions on Fees and Expenses of Arbitrators in CETA) which make this device more accessible to SMEs.</p>
<p>1.6.2. Government procurement will need to be covered by any investment agreement, along with public-private partnerships (PPPs), governments working alongside the private sector. The EESC policy on PPP was the subject of ECO/272 issued on 21 October 2010. Although the opinion was generally supportive of PPP,</p>	<p>Specific disciplines concerning government procurement are more suitable for broader agreements such as Free-Trade Agreements, with a stronger market component, than for the more specialised standalone investment agreements.</p>

<p>it also flagged up certain concerns, which are still very relevant. The Committee has also previously stated that PPPs "could be an important instrument for implementing development strategies, assuming they are correctly calibrated and communicate with interested parties". Any investment agreement must therefore enable the possibility of public investments and PPP. Both have to guarantee that the goals on sustainability are met.</p>	<p>Investment agreements may act as a means of promoting Public-Private Partnerships, and should certainly not be seen as a barrier. The protection granted in Investment Agreements extends to all assets which have the characteristics of an investment, such as enterprises, securities, intellectual property rights and moveable or immovable property, as well as specific forms which are typical of economic cooperation between the public and the private sector, such as concessions.</p>
<p>1.6.3. The Committee recommends too that in the sustainable development chapter of any investment agreement the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) must also be covered, including reference to socially responsible investing, such as United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) [...] full mutual recognition of wider international guidelines by both negotiating parties is essential. These include the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which are in the process of implementation. The Committee stresses that any action at either EU or international level should not run counter to or jeopardise these.</p> <p>5.2.7 Article 13.6.2 of the Korea Agreement refers to fair and ethical trade with regard to trade in goods, and also to schemes "involving corporate social responsibility and accountability". Annex 13 also provides for "exchange of</p>	<p>In relation to other countries and regions, the EU has included in recent Free Trade Agreements legal provisions to promote CSR. The EU intends to pursue a similar approach in ongoing and planned negotiations, including those for stand-alone investment agreements.</p> <p>We encourage other countries to further promote CSR and responsible business conduct. In this context, we advocate in particular greater support for, and use of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, including adherence by non-OECD members, because of the Guidelines' broad scope, unique grievance mechanism and recommendations to help enterprises conduct due diligence in their supply chains.</p>

<p>information and co-operation" on these points, including "the effective implementation and follow-up of internationally agreed guidelines". The Committee strongly recommends that this approach be extended to investment agreements. The role of CSR in any investment agreement will be critically important.</p>	
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