



## Opinion



**Luca Jahier (IT)**  
President of the "Various Interests" Group

## Democracy is participation The crisis in Europe requires political solutions!

"Europe's crisis is political, and it requires political solutions". This is the unanimous and ringing message that was contained in the various declarations made by the heads of the major European institutions at the beginning of September.

Today, three facts clearly point in this direction.

Firstly there is President Barroso's excellent State of the Union address to the European Parliament, in which he stated categorically that Europe's challenges required greater unity and solidarity, which implies further integration in the sense that

integration depends on having more democracy at European level. Outlining a clear roadmap for the full range of sectorial and general priorities, he called for a clear possibility of revision of the treaties, towards a more complete federation of 27 Member States.

The second element is the presentation, announced by the European Commission, of a package of measures to strengthen banking supervision in the euro area, providing an explicit transfer of competence from the national level to the ECB, leading to the creation of a European Banking Union.

The third is the much anticipated decision of the German Constitutional Court, which must be praised for its pro-European spirit and for giving the go-ahead to the complex European counter-offensive operation against international speculation, which had already been in evidence in the excellent decision taken in early September by the European Central Bank, showing great determination and autonomy. But this decision should also be remembered because it reaffirmed the vital need for parliamentary control of joint decisions, to comply with the shape and substance of our democracies.

## It's time for a European Foundation Statute

### Editorial



**Mall HELLAM (EE)**  
Member of Group III

On 8 February 2012, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation on a European Foundation Statute. One may ask why we need yet more EU company legislation? The answer is simple: While goods, services and people can now move with relative ease across borders in the EU, the same cannot be said for resources and actions for public benefit. The European Foundation Statute would remedy this situation. This simple legal tool could significantly increase resources for improving the lives of ordinary European citizens.

The EESC is now preparing an own-initiative opinion on what such a statute should look like while national governments and members of the European Parliament are starting their review of the matter. The EESC has highlighted in a previous opinion the significant contribution of

foundations in many areas. It is estimated that there some 110,000 foundations in Europe, collectively spending over 100 billion euros annually on projects and programmes, and providing employment to up to one million Europeans. Foundations are also playing a key role in helping to achieve the goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set by the Europe 2020 strategy.

The sector is growing as is the interest among foundations to work beyond national boundaries to address cross-border issues including migration, health, socio-economic development and employment, scientific excellence, the environment, and many more. However, the evidence shows that many foundations encounter numerous obstacles when they want to operate outside their national borders.

The Statute will not replace existing national foundation laws, but will act as an optional and complementary tool. It will reduce costs and uncertainty for public benefit foundations working across borders by providing one single set of rules to create European Foundations. The new Regulation should also strike a balance between easy access to the Statute in terms of formation, and trustworthiness in terms of transparency and accountability.

The need to get the Statute on track is self-evident, especially at a time of socio-economic and political turmoil, when every cent counts and when all actors, including foundations, should have the adequate tools to maximise their impact for the benefit of society.

This last point mentioned above seems to be the most important, in part because it takes into account the fact that all our countries are currently experiencing a sweeping and real social emergency that threatens the survival of the same social pact on which our democracies are based. It is also important because, as was highlighted by the Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti in a joint statement with President Van Rompuy, there is a growing populist anti-European voice rising in all our countries, a division between northern and southern Europe, and a return to national prejudices that are fed by growing resentment against the stringent austerity measures that have been implemented in many countries over the past three years. Precisely for this reason, the two leaders publicly agreed on the need to hold a European Summit of Heads of State and Government in the very near future, to tackle seriously the virus of populism that feeds base fears and prejudices, which could lead to the disintegration of the Union.

We couldn't agree more. Moreover, this "momentum" is demonstrated by the fact that the issue of Europe's future is becoming increasingly central in all national debates, and also, in an unprecedented way, in recent national election campaigns. This was the case in the Greek elections, as well as in France, Finland and the Netherlands, and I am sure it will also be true of the upcoming elections in Italy and Germany.

But I think a final note is necessary. Greater integration and the transfer of major powers to the European institutions are the way ahead: this is still the subject of evident and strong controversy, but is historically absolutely necessary. This requires more guidance and control by the European Parliament, in cooperation with national parliaments. This is representative democracy, the basis of our democratic system, as enshrined in Articles 10 and 12 of the current Treaty on European Union.

In the current Treaty, alongside those two articles, Article 11 sets out the scope of participatory

democracy and, in particular, what we call European civil dialogue. In this regard, a recent EESC opinion, of which I am the rapporteur and promoter, and which was approved unanimously by the Committee's



Social Affairs Section and is due for adoption at one of the EESC's upcoming plenary sessions, establishes a clear and precise roadmap for the full, urgent and opportune application of Article 11, for the sustained development of European civil dialogue, in its scope, shape, structure and continuity.

These are proposals that we can begin to put into practice during the coming months so that 2013, the European Year of Citizenship, will ultimately provide an opportunity to carry out the broad debate on the future of Europe under the parameters of participatory democracy.

We want to say clearly to Messrs Barroso, Van Rompuy, Monti and Schultz and all those who are moving positively in the right direction for Europe that now is the time to make a decisive step forward in building a solid basis for European civil dialogue and that each EU institution must play its full part. The EESC has been working for a number of years on this front: the Compendium and the Roadmap published by Group III in the recent past are evidence of our strongly proactive involvement. The Committee is called upon, more than others, to face the challenge in both the national and European public arenas, and has the required knowledge, network and strength to do so.

The political solutions that Europe badly needs today cannot be pushed onto the shoulders of its citizens, and that is why we have two forms of democracy, representative and participatory – we must make more use of these and strengthen them significantly.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-participatory-democracy-prospects>

Quote of the month...



"What some people mistake for the high cost of living is really the cost of high living."

Doug Larson (1926 -)  
American author and journalist

Group III Members in the Spotlight playing a key role



MAUREEN O'NEILL (UK)  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF GROUP III

**'BOOSTING RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACROSS EUROPE'**

This meeting organised in the EESC by the International Longevity Centre was hosted by the EESC on 18th June and was attended by 40 people drawn from a range of organisations across Europe which represented the pensions and savings industries, EU Commission, European Parliament and age related organisations. The event was introduced by Maureen O'Neill, Vice President of Group III and Xavier Verboven, Group II and Vice President of the Labour Market Observatory, presented the EESC opinion on the White Paper on Sustainable Pensions which was being drawn up by the EESC. The aim of the event was to highlight the broad pensions/retirement savings context across Europe; explore pensions in the context of the economic crisis; consider the EU White Paper and debate potential social change. The outcomes of the meeting would be included in a report produced by the ILC. The ILC is a member of the International Longevity Global Alliance which aims to help societies to address longevity and population ageing in positive and productive ways using the life course approach, highlighting older people's productivity and contribution to family and society as a whole.

<http://www.ilcuk.org.uk>

**'TACKLING CHILD POVERTY- GOOD PRACTICE SHAPING POLICY'**

This seminar was organised by Caritas Europa and hosted by the EESC to launch its report on "Changing the Life Path of Children in Poverty across Europe. The EESC hosted this event which was chaired by Maureen O'Neill, Vice President of Group III. Keynote speakers included representatives from the EU Commission, European Parliament, the Cyprus Presidency, an eyewitness account of child poverty in Greece. These presentations were followed by interventions from Caritas workers

from different Member States setting out good practice and then a panel discussion. It was a very full programme and the issues raised and debated were a reflection of the work undertaken during the EU Year on Poverty in relation to child poverty (Mrs King Group I was the rapporteur).

**CARITAS SUMMER UNIVERSITY – LEUVEN**

Maureen O'Neill was invited to give a presentation to this group of Caritas Members who came from across Europe. The theme of the University was 'Care and Migration' and the sessions covered child poverty, migration, age, mental health, project management and communication. It was a very stimulating event and a great opportunity to discuss a range of issues from the perspective of those who provide services in different circumstances.



MICHAEL SMYTH (UK)  
PRESIDENT OF THE ECO SECTION  
MEMBER OF GROUP III

**'RETIRING INTO ACTION'**

This was a roundtable event was jointly organised by the EESC, Edinburgh University and the EU Parliament Office in Edinburgh. The aim was to consider the economic and social contributions made by older people to our societies. The 20 invited participants represented a range of organisations from different Member States. The event provided an opportunity to debate issues in small groups, to share ideas and to formulate a series of actions to be taken forward. The keynote speaker was Michael Smyth (UK), the EESC ECO President and the content of the discussion contributes to the opinion being written by Maureen O'Neill on the 'Participation of Older People in Society' as part of the EESC's work during the EU Year on Active Ageing.

## News from Group III

On 3 October 2012, the Various Interests Group will organise a conference at the EESC on the topic 'Social Enterprises and the Europe 2020 Strategy: innovative solutions for a sustainable Europe'. Within the general framework of the 2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives, the objective of the event of the Various Interests Group is to actively support social enterprises as significant actors in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and of the Single Market. Particularly in the current period of economic and social crises, social enterprises are able to bring innovative solutions for social cohesion and inclusion, job creation, growth and the promotion of active citizenship. It is precisely the positive impact of social enterprises on society, the environment and communities which can contribute to implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy and the aim of the Single Market Act for a 'highly competitive social market economy'.

However, unless a level-playing field for social enterprises is established, with legal, administrative and financial instruments conducive to the development of the sector, the potential of social enterprises will not be unleashed. It is within this context that the Various Interests Group hopes to raise awareness of the importance of the sector and to examine avenues for enhancing its impact, within both Europe and at the international level. The conference will be organised in close cooperation with the Social Economy Category (<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.social-economy-category>) and will bring together approximately 150 participants, including Group III members, wider civil society representatives and guest speakers. Moreover, the event will clearly provide the opportunity to raise the visibility of EESC Opinions and of the work of the Committee at large.



## Highlights of the July 2012 EESC Plenary Session

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

**Mrs MADER (FR)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "A European Consumer Agenda - Boosting confidence and growth" – INT/649.

**Mr PALMGREN (FI)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "Report on Competition Policy 2011" – INT/650.

**Mr HERNÁNDEZ BATALLER (ES)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "The internal market and State aid for the regions" – INT/653.

**Mr KRAUSE (ES)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Direct sellers: the specific case of economically independent self-employed workers" – INT/654.

**Mrs FEDERSPIEL (DA)** is the Rapporteur for the additional opinion on: "The Single Market Act - identifying missing measures" – INT/OMU/655.

**Mr PEGADO LIZ (PT)** is the Rapporteur for the information opinion on: "Better regulation: implementing acts and delegated acts" – INT/656.

**Mrs MADER (FR)** is the President of the study group for the opinion on: "Recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms" – ECO/333.

**Mr PATER (PL)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Ten years on, where is the euro headed? (The EU's economic and political future and the new Treaty)" – ECO/334.

**Mr LUCAN (RO)** is the President of the study group for the opinion on: "The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016" – SOC/467.

**Mrs RODERT (SE)** is the Rapporteur for the opinion on: "European social label" – SOC/468.

**Mr TRANTINA (CZ)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Job creation through apprenticeships and lifelong vocational training: the role of business in education in the EU" – SOC/469.

**Mr BALON (PL)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Employee influence and participation as a pillar of sound business management in Europe and balanced approaches to overcoming the crisis" – SOC/470.

**Mrs ATTARD (MT)** is the Co-Rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion on: "The gender dimension in the Europe 2020 strategy" – SOC/471.

**Mr SCHLÜTER (DE)** is the Rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion on: "European Year of Mental Health – better work, better quality of life" – SOC/472.

**Mr GKOFAS (EL)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Nautical industries: restructuring accelerated by the crisis" – CCMI/103.

**Mr JÍROVEC (CZ)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "Sustainable growth business models, low-carbon economy and industrial change" – CCMI/104.

**Mr SOMVILLE (BE)** is the Rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion on: "Civil society's contribution to a strategy for prevention and reduction of food losses and food waste" – NAT/570.



**Mrs SLAVOVA (BG)** is the President of the study group for the own-initiative opinion on: "The current state of commercial relations between food suppliers and the large retail sector" – NAT/571.

**Mr STERN (SK)** is the President of the study group for the opinion on: "Roadworthiness tests of motor vehicles" – TEN/491.

**Mr MACIULEVICIUS (LT)** is the President of the study group for the exploratory opinion on: "Getting EU energy islands connected: growth, competitiveness, solidarity and sustainability in the EU internal energy market" – TEN/493.

**Mr CINGAL (FR)** is the Rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion on: "The quality of rail services in the EU" – TEN/495.

**Mrs PICHENOT (FR)** is the Rapporteur for the own-initiative opinion on: "Achievements and future prospects of the Millennium Development Goals: input from civil society" – REX/372.

**Mr GOBIŃŚ (LT)** is the President of the Coordination group for the "European Year of Citizens (2013)"

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

## OUR GROUP'S STRENGTH



The 'Consumers and Environment Category' will hold a meeting on Friday 5 October 2012 to discuss, amongst other points, the organisation of the 2013 edition of the European Consumers Day. The draft agenda will be available shortly on the Group III website.

The 'Social Economy Category' will hold a meeting on Monday 8 October 2012 to discuss social innovation and local development, with Mr Roberto di Meglio, Senior Specialist of the ILO as keynote speaker. Professor Monzon of the research centre CIRIEC, will also present the EESC's commissioned study on the Social Economy in the EU.

The 'Farmers' Category' will hold a meeting on Thursday 25 October 2012. The draft agenda will be available shortly on the Group III website.

The 'SMEs/Crafts/Liberal Professions' will hold a meeting on Friday 26 October 2012. Mrs Maarit Nyman from DG ENTR.E.4 - SME Policy Development and Crafts - will make a presentation covering the SME definition, the Entrepreneurship Act 2020 and the Entrepreneurship Action Plan. The draft agenda will be available shortly on the Group III website.

To find out more about the categories and their members, please go to: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.group-3>

# Overview of our Members' Work in the EESC

At its plenary session on 11-12 July the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted the following opinions for which Group III members were Rapporteurs or Co-Rapporteurs.



**KÖSSLER Ingrid (SE)** – INT/642 “The transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of public health insurance systems” (EESC opinion 1573/2012)

The EESC highlights that health is a high priority for Europe's citizens and reaffirms that every medicine authorised in the EU should be available to patients in all Member States. The EESC welcomes the time limits of 120 days proposed by the Commission and suggests that, in order to further streamline patients' access to medicines, the same timelines should be applied to all innovative medicines, whether or not subject to national health technology assessment. The EESC considers that patient and consumer organisations should have the right to request initiation of the process of inclusion of medical products in health insurance systems as well as have information about the progress of this process. It notes also that health insurance companies have an increasing role and influence. Therefore, their activities should be reviewed by the Member States on regular basis. Finally, the EESC urges that decisions on price freeze, price reductions and price approval should be based on transparent and objective criteria, implementation of which should be monitored by the Commission.



**Cristian PÎRVULESCU (RO)** – SOC/442 “Enhanced intra-EU solidarity in the field of asylum - An EU agenda for better responsibility-sharing and more mutual trust” (EESC opinion 1577/2012)

In this opinion, the Committee considers that the principle of solidarity should continue to be the cornerstone of this policy, despite the fact that the number and size of the Member States together with their varying degrees of exposure to refugee flows creates an uneven playing field which complicates asylum policy. Moreover, it considers that an incentive-based approach could get asylum policy running smoothly, provided that the most appropriate incentives are identified and properly supported, including financial support. As regards practical cooperation, the EESC urges the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to make swifter progress towards greater operational capacity, as boosting the EASO's capacity is both urgent and necessary and should be coordinated with the Migration and Asylum Fund's programme and implementation. In conclusion, the Committee also calls for improvements to refugee integration measures. Despite its efficient procedures for swiftly and correctly granting refugee status, the European asylum system which we aim to build could fail in the area of integration.



**DE LAMAZE Edouard (FR)** – SOC/454 “Establishing for the period 2014 to 2020 the Justice programme” (EESC opinion 1580/2012)

In this opinion, the EESC welcomes this proposal's aim of simplification and rationalisation and supports the Commission's preference for merging the Civil Justice and Criminal Justice programmes, which is justified by the fact that the objectives, stakeholders and types of action funded are very close. However, in the context of the new Justice programme for the period 2014-2020, despite the legal reasons given in the proposal, the EESC continues to question the advisability of adding a third objective, i.e. to prevent and reduce drug demand and supply, to the first two “specific objectives”, i.e. to promote proper application of Union legislation in the areas of judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters and to facilitate access to justice. The EESC reiterates its frequently-expressed opinion that anti-drug measures should focus more on prevention through an educational, health and social approach, and less on a punitive approach.

The EESC welcomes the new direction taken in this proposal, which seeks to include all legal professionals and, in particular, lawyers in European judicial training. Similarly, the EESC stresses the urgency of including all types of law practitioners in transnational judicial cooperation networks by providing the necessary funds. In order to create a common rights framework, the EESC stresses the need to look upon the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a basis for harmonisation.

**DE LAMAZE Edouard (FR)** – SOC/459 “The freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime in the European Union” (EESC opinion 1584/2012)

The EESC wishes to highlight the need for a global, operational and integrated approach in this field. As a first step, identifying and tracing the proceeds of crime requires strengthening the powers of the Asset Recovery Offices and Eurojust. Amongst other things, the EESC also calls for promotion of a common culture among all relevant professionals and a cross-cutting approach across all Commission DGs. Apart from the necessary coordination and the systematic exchange of information between national Asset Recovery Offices, the EESC believes that it is necessary in the long term to consider centralisation at European level in this area, whether through a new, dedicated organisation or directly through Eurojust. If measures to freeze and confiscate the proceeds of crime are to be effective, a holistic approach is needed that governs every dimension of the instrument and, when it comes to the confiscated goods being reused, takes care to give priority to socially beneficial purposes. On that subject, the Committee highlights the need to avert the risk that a direct sale of the goods could enable criminal organisations to regain possession of them. Finally, the EESC notes that the effectiveness of the fight against organised crime cannot justify any violation whatsoever of the fundamental rights set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, particularly the rights of the defence.



**PATER Krzysztof (PL)** – SOC/457 “An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions” (EESC opinion 1582/2012)

Public pension systems are one of the most important components of the social security safety net in almost all Member States and a fundamental part of the European Social Model, as pensions are the main source of income for pensioners. Pension systems do not operate in isolation from national economic systems. The Committee therefore calls on the Member States to ensure that their pension policies tie in closely with their labour-market, social-protection, fiscal and macro-economic policies. The majority of Member States have directed their policies towards cutting expenditure, by raising the statutory retirement age and shifting to a pension-indexation system based on price increases. The Committee thinks that this approach could pose a social risk in the long run as it may expose many pensioners to the risk of poverty. The Committee feels that the Member States should reallocate wealth and focus their reform efforts on increasing the revenues that fund their pension systems by extending them to all socio-occupational categories, increasing employment, improving the mechanisms for collecting contributions, and tackling undeclared work and tax evasion. The Committee recommends that standards on minimum pensions or pension income protection mechanisms be included in future legislation to provide income above the poverty threshold. The Committee is convinced that the legal framework for complementary retirement schemes should be improved, as these will play a role in the future adequacy and sustainability of pension systems. The Committee is seriously concerned about some of the proposals for occupational pensions. As pension schemes are very different from life insurances services, the Committee doesn't support the stated aim of reviewing the IORP Directive, to maintain “a level playing field with Solvency II”.



**GOBIŅŠ Andris (LV)** – SOC/458 “Europe for Citizens” (EESC opinion 1583/2012)

The EESC strongly supports pressing ahead with the Europe for Citizens programme and its key elements of encouraging and facilitating the active participation of citizens in political and public life. The Europe for Citizens programme must comply with the democratic norms set out in the Lisbon Treaty and support their firmer anchorage in Europe, especially where the mechanisms for participation and transparency provided for in Articles 10 and 11 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) are concerned. The programme's strand on remembrance should promote a common identity and values. The EESC welcomes the importance of the role played by society in reuniting a Europe that was so long divided. The EESC welcomes the fact that the proposal under consideration envisages support for both vertical and horizontal dialogue, although the arrangements for horizontal dialogue need to be further clarified. In addition the EESC makes a number of specific proposals amongst which are: representatives of the EESC, the CoR and the partners in the structured dialogue should also be involved in the programme's steering group, and project management should be simplified; voluntary work should be recognised as co-financing.

The EESC categorically rejects the comment made in the Legislative financial statement for proposals, that the participation of medium and small-sized organisations presents a risk to programme management, and calls for it to be removed immediately. The EESC points out that such groups are particularly well-suited to civic participation.



**TRÍAS PINTO Carlos (ES)** – NAT/541 “Cooperatives and agri-food development” (EESC opinion 1593/2012)

In this own-initiative opinion, the EESC states that, as well as pushing providers and consumers further apart, distribution channels have been hindering the transparency of the operations they encompass, so that production costs are undervalued and prices paid to producers often do not reach the minimum thresholds required for their economic survival. Furthermore, the low bargaining power and captive dependency of those operators who endure unfair prices in their business increase the prevailing imbalance in the agri-food chain, perpetuating anomalous market behaviour. An analysis of the current market therefore indicates the following: fragmented supply, concentrated distribution and inconsistent demand. This situation provides an ideal environment for speculation. Conventional distribution channels do not offer adequate transparency in price formation, leading to serious imbalances in the bargaining power of its stakeholders, to the detriment of producers and consumers (the first and last links in the chain). The structural reform of the markets, aimed at achieving a sustainable production and consumption model, requires the agri-food value chain to be rebalanced, with agricultural associations in general – and cooperatives in particular – playing a modulating and integrating role which enables the appropriate adjustments and changes to be carried out, all through inter-sectoral interaction and dialogue. Based on individual or family producers, it is necessary to foster the activities of associations and cooperatives on the ground, creating larger structures (regional networks and competitive clusters) which bring farmers closer to the portions of distribution channels with the greatest added value. This cooperative structure will make it possible to maximise yields and meet the diversity of demand, shortening distribution channels between production and consumption hubs. Furthermore, cooperative integration ensures greater traceability throughout the process, in terms of both quality and price formation, which in turn means optimised resources and greater efficiency.

**Gabriel SARRÓ IPARRAGUIRRE (ES)** – NAT/549 “European Maritime and Fisheries Fund” (EESC opinion 1594/2012)

The Committee welcomes the Commission's proposal but feels that it should be made clear in relation to the first objective that fisheries and



aquaculture should be sustainable and competitive from an economic, social and environmental point of view. The EESC also regrets the fact that there is no specific reference in the objectives of the EMFF (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) to the processing and marketing sector for fisheries and aquaculture products. The Committee endorses the objective to eliminate overcapacity in the fleet wherever it may exist. This is why the EESC considers that support for the permanent cessation of fishing vessels needs to remain in place, provided that this enables each segment to carry out a genuine adjustment to the existing fishing opportunities. The EESC also considers that support for temporary cessation should be kept in place. The Committee attaches great importance to support for fostering relations and partnerships between scientists and fishermen, promoting human capital and social dialogue, facilitating diversification and job creation and improving safety on board. It also sees a need to introduce measures aimed at bringing young professionals into the fishing sector, so as to help mitigate the lack of transfer between generations, and to focus more on creating and maintaining jobs. The EESC endorses support for the implementation of conservation measures under the CFP; for limiting the impact of fishing on the marine environment; for innovation; for protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems; for mitigating climate change; for improving the use of unwanted catches; and for increasing energy efficiency.



**KRAUZE Armands (LV)** – NAT/560 “Promotion measures and information provision for agricultural products: a reinforced value-added European strategy for promoting the tastes of Europe” (EESC opinion 1596/2012)

The EESC supports the two fundamental aims of the new information and promotion policy: consumer information and awareness on the EU market, and export promotion on the external market. The Committee considers it crucial to increase the budget for information and promotion measures and calls for clear guidelines to applicants, a strict evaluation system, greater transparency in the selection of programmes and simplification of the procedures. In this regard, the EESC welcomes the proposal to present a multiannual framework programme with detailed information for the first year only, making it possible to re-adjust the plans for subsequent years. The Committee emphasises the importance of clarifying the role of brands and the balance between generic promotion and the promotion of brands. The concept of EU origin could be conveyed through umbrella slogans that do not jeopardise the consumer's right to be properly informed. The EESC advocates a single list of eligible products, which should be extended to products within other quality schemes that deliver the European quality message. Regarding the possibility to broaden the range of beneficiaries, priority should be given to trade organisations within the agri-food sector. The Committee supports the proposal to establish a European platform for the exchange of good practices between professionals in the development and implementation of multi-country campaigns. The EESC agrees that multi-country programmes should be given priority and suggests that the Commission should increase its contribution, especially where emerging markets are involved.



**KALLIO Seppo (FI)** – NAT/561 “A multi-annual plan for the cod stocks in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks” (EESC opinion 1597/2012)

In this opinion, the EESC is very pleased with the success of the plan for the Baltic cod stocks and feels that it is important that the plan be extended and that the proposed amendments to Articles 4, 5 and 8 and to Article 29(2), (3) and (4) are acceptable and necessary technical changes to comply with the TFEU. However, the Committee is not in favour of delegating legislative power to the Commission to determine fishing mortality rates, as proposed in Articles 27 and 29 a. The EESC considers that it is the privilege of the Council to take decisions in this area under Article 43(3) TFEU and fears that if the Commission is delegated the power to change the target fishing mortality rate, on which basis catch quotas are determined, this could in the short term lead to a rapid change in catch quotas that would be damaging to the fishing industry.



**PICHENOT Evelyne (FR)** – REX/339 “The EU's relations with Moldova: What role for organised civil society?” (EESC opinion 1602/2012)

In this own-initiative opinion, the EESC welcomes significant progress made in EU-Moldova relations and it underlines the importance of continued efforts towards successful conclusion of negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade and it advocates that a balanced agreement on DCTFA is reached and that civil society organisations are involved at every stage of the process. The Committee calls more particularly for ensuring an effective participation of Moldovan bodies in the public consultation launched by the Commission and in civil society public hearings and meetings, which are part of the sustainability impact assessment, and for regular briefings on the content of the negotiations. The EESC proposes to establish a Moldovan Economic, Social and Environmental Council (MESEC) based on existing experience within the EU or under the neighbourhood arrangements. Finally, the EESC considers that involving all relevant stakeholders in implementing agreements with the EU in the energy and research fields, developing expertise on ecological approaches, stepping up efforts towards more effective anti-corruption mechanisms as well as facilitating access to the labour market for young people and women will greatly contribute to further development of the Moldovan society and economy.

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

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