



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMITTEE

EMPLOYERS' GROUP

Group I Internal

Newsletter of the Employers' Group

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MARCH 2012

EDITORIAL BY EVE PÄÄRENDSON

Most of the increasingly rapid changes in today's world are not to the advantage of the EU. 2011 was very challenging for Europe. The Euro zone sovereign debt crisis placed severe questions on European unity and integration, whilst the 'Arab Spring' was a profound test for the EU's diplomatic service.



Eve Päärendson, Employers' Group Vice-President

External relations are of high importance to European business:

1. **Most economic growth is now taking place outside the EU**, notably in the markets of emerging and developing countries: **40% of global economic growth comes from Asia.**
2. **A key challenge for European SMEs comes from internationalisation.** SMEs comprise 99% of all European companies but **only 13% are internationally active outside the EU** through trade, investment and other cooperation.
3. Outside Europe there is poor understanding as to how the EU functions. This is further exacerbated by deep concern as to its economic situation - Europe's recent preoccupation with its internal problems has made it a decreasingly important partner at the global level. **Our main challenge**

now is how to improve the marketing of Europe, its economy and culture globally. Increasing the EU's competitiveness around the world is also essential – **a large amount of EU growth and jobs increasingly rely on exports and successful trade and investment.**

How can the EESC Employers' Group best contribute to this process?

The Employers' Group of the EESC has established an **External Relations Network**, which aims to improve coordination and strategic planning, and complements the activities of the EESC's external relations Section. It operates as a strategic forum by bringing together the Group's members who are both interested and active in the field of external relations. Among its goals are to promote the EU itself, to restore confidence in European economy and businesses, and to improve its external image, including that of the EESC.

Among the **highest ranking needs for European companies are: better access to key developed and emerging markets, returning the European Single Market to a globally attractive destination again, and improved coordination and cooperation across the EU in external relations.**

We are therefore renewing contacts with our counterparts all around the world and with EU business representative organisations abroad. Special attention will now be paid to North Africa and the Middle East in order to support democratic stabilisation and to assist civil society organisations, especially business representative organisations there.

The editorial continues on page 2 →

→ The editorial continues from page 1

It is our conviction that better functioning dialogue between the three Groups of the EESC and their respective counterparts in partner countries will increase the importance of civil society and specifically of the EESC's role to carry its voice.

We cooperate closely with the EU level business organisations (BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP, Eurochambres, EuroCommerce, UEAPME, BIAC) and with third country business representative organisations to the EU. We have also strengthened links with other EU institutions, including the EEAS - more effective economic diplomacy is key.

Our companies need a quality business support service, SMEs in particular need more assistance in:

- entering key new markets (such as China),
- coping with disadvantaged positions in third markets,
- minimising the risks due to inadequate IPR protection,
- access to energy and raw materials,
- coping with non-tariff barriers and legislative issues in third countries,
- improving export capacity.

There is also a **need to stimulate better synergy between EU delegations and business organisations abroad**. They can only promote and protect EU business

interests if they cooperate better.

Companies from smaller Member States have to look for greater assistance from the European support structures since their own national business representative structures coverage abroad is necessarily limited.

We should re-examine the many existing EU-funded business support instruments, (Enterprise Europe Network, EU Business Support Centres, SME Centres abroad ...), **services and programmes** (e.g. EU Gateway and Executive Training Programmes in South Korea and Japan) in order to sharpen their relevance to the needs of clients/participants. We also need to **increase the awareness among entrepreneurs about what various networks and support services are available**.

Since lack of knowledge about other business cultures is a major reason for failure in a foreign market, it is important to organise joint events, such as the Conference on "Active Ageing and New Opportunities for Business in Europe and Japan" held in March 2012 at the EESC.

Finally, to equip European companies, especially SMEs, with the skills necessary in this multicultural world we also need continue to develop student exchanges in technical and research areas with a mandatory internship component (such as the EU-Japan Vulcanus programme). The recently signed EU-Brazil joint declaration for facilitation exchange of young professionals is another very promising development.

MEMBERS' VOICES

Tadeusz Klis, member of the EESC Employers' Group, is **Vice-President of the Polish Craft Association**.



Tadeusz Klis (PL)

Member of Group I

to strengthen the economic activity of citizens

At the Committee, he is part of the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO) and Section of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT).

Tadeusz Klis is an engineer, and together with his three sons, runs a building company.

According to Mr. Klis: "I think it is important

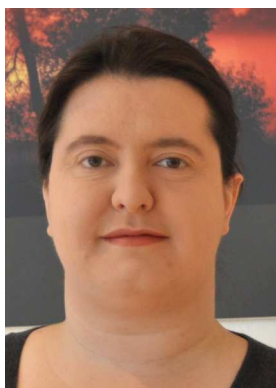
" I think it is important to strengthen the economic activity of citizens and create conditions for the development of family businesses in Europe "

and create conditions for the development of family businesses in Europe."

In the EESC, his major concern is creating opportunities and environment for the development for SMEs.

In his words "I think **we need a better climate for faster and more efficient execution of the 'Small Business Act for Europe'**. I am all for a greater promotion of the **'Think Small First'** principle as well as the mechanism of an **'SME test'**."

Heidi Lougheed joined the EESC in April 2008, having been nominated by IBEC, the **Irish Business and Employers Confederation**. She is the **Head of European Affairs** at IBEC and oversees the work of their Brussels-based European office. She shared, "I am involved in explaining the European Union to employers based in Ireland and in representing their interests at EU level". Ms Lougheed coordinates IBEC's overall work as a member of **BUSINESSEUROPE** and has recently been made **Chairperson of BUSINESSEUROPE's CSR Working Group**.



Heidi Lougheed (IE)

Member of Group I

Prior to moving to Brussels, Heidi worked for IBEC for eight years in the **Social Affairs Department dealing with issues like immigration/free movement of workers**, developing national measures for information and consultation, implementing legislation on part-time work, fixed-term work and Carer's Leave.

In many of the areas that she covered, she developed **training programmes for employers**. She remains the **Irish employer nominee on the European Social Dialogue Committee**.

Heidi Lougheed holds a Masters degree in European Studies from the College of Europe (Natolin Campus).

Heidi is particularly interested in explaining the European Union and its functioning to citizens and employers, and in helping businesses to get engaged in its processes. In her work in the EESC, Ms Lougheed would particularly like to assist its opinions in **bringing pragmatic and workable suggestions to the attention of the European institutions**, to continue to improve the technical contribution the Committee makes to debates so that realistic solutions can be found.

Whilst she remains very interested in the area of employment and social affairs, she has a wide range of newer interests, mostly centered around **enabling newer regulations to have the capacity to tackle new modern standards and practices** in a changing world, whilst retaining Europe's global competitive position.

GROUP I OPINIONS

We feature one of the opinions with rapporteurs from Group I, adopted during the 479th Plenary session on March 28nd and 29th:

Specific problems facing islands, ECO/300

José María Espuny Moyano is rapporteur on the European Economic and Social Committee's opinion entitled **"Specific problems facing islands" ECO/300**. He shared, "having followed the directions of our President Henri Malosse, **I was fortunate and privileged to be the person drafting the opinion on the specific problems of islands**. With this opinion, the **EESC shows its sensitivity and commitment to all minorities**." In fact, the inhabitants of the islands of the European Union are around 4% of the total EU population.

Given that island populations enjoy some advantages and suffer many drawbacks, all the members of the study group collaborated during the drafting of the opinion.

Their common goal was to lead the Commission, Parliament and the Council to understand that this population and its problems should be provided with a special sensitivity in all EU policies.



José María Espuny Moyano (ES)

Member of Group I

We organised a hearing in Palma de Mallorca in the presence of five Members of European Parliament (who arrived just after the end of the plenary session in Strasbourg). **This signifies that our position is now 'on the EP's radar' and enjoys the 'complicity' of the Parliament**. Also the Commission and the Council must take into account the differences among these European citizens when implementing certain key Community policies.

GROUP I OPINIONS

Double taxation in the single market, ECO/304

The EESC opinion by **Vincent Farrugia, Double taxation in the single market, ECO/304**, discusses the issue of double taxation, which especially affects individuals and SMEs who cannot afford the lengthy and costly legal and administrative procedures to seek a positive remedy.



Vincent Farrugia (MT)
Member of Group I

The European Commission is proposing an EU Forum on Double Taxation to deal with this issue. The EESC, through a previous opinion on the removal of cross border tax obstacles, recommended the establishment of a Tax Observatory which would be more effective as it does not simply discuss but observes and acts.

It is essential for the single market that the Commission moves as fast as possible from discussion to action. **The EESC is therefore recommending for the proposed Forum to be only a first step leading to a full fledged Observatory.** The Commission is doing very well in identifying the cross border tax obstacles but citizens and small business owners especially seek determined action to remove these obstacles. **Double taxation should be a top priority.**

According to Mr. Farrugia, rapporteur and Member of the Employers' Group, "The EESC will be using all possible media presentation and seek the support of associations representing business and civil society together with **direct pressure on MEPs to ensure that the tax obstacles hampering the fulfillment of the single market objectives are tackled through a coherent and comprehensive action programme.** The EESC is committed to this aim."

Implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems, TEN/476

The success of the European Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) programmes, Galileo and EGNOS, is vitally important to the future prosperity and security of the EU. Today, 6%-7% of European GDP-27, i.e. €800bn, depends on the American GPS system, which is ultimately under the control of the US military.

The Galileo programme will create the first GNSS under civilian control, to provide uninterrupted satellite navigation services that will yield €69bn of net financial benefits (at current prices) and create significant strategic advantage for Europe.

Galileo will also be critical to the creation of new products and services that will not only boost smart growth in Europe, but will also support sustainable development by helping to increase

energy efficiency and by reducing the environmental impact of economic development.



Thomas McDonogh (IE)
Member of Group I

In its Opinion by Employers' Group Member **Thomas McDonogh** entitled "Implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems", TEN/476 the Committee supports the proposed funding and governance model for the European GNSS and it calls on the Commission to ensure that the programmes now receive the strong leadership and unambiguous support they need to succeed. Furthermore, the Committee has also stressed the need to ensure that the quality of all Galileo and EGNOS technology and services introduced to the market be of the highest standard.

GROUP I EVENTS

Group I Debate with Daniel Calleja Crespo on the European Commission's policies for SMEs, 22 February

On 22 February 2012, Henri Malosse, President of the Employers' Group of the EESC hosted a **debate on the European Commission's policies for SMEs with Daniel Calleja Crespo**, Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission. Mr. Calleja Crespo presented the **major policies for growth, particularly:**

- support to innovation,
- SME financing,
- the strategy of industrial sectors
- and reduction of administrative formalities for businesses.

"My goal is to enable citizens to create a business in the EU in less than three days", said Mr. Calleja Crespo, who was named SME Envoy by Commission Vice President Antonio Tajani. As such, he would be responsible for communication between the EC and SMEs, as well as promote the interests of SMEs (including "Think Small First") throughout the Commission.



Daniel Calleja Crespo

Henri Malosse

GROUP I EVENTS

Group I Conference “Ageing Populations and New Opportunities for Businesses in Europe and Japan”, 15 March

Ageing populations and falling population rates pose two of the greatest challenges faced today by both Japan and the EU. In Europe 16% of people are now aged 65 or over, whereas in Japan this figure has reached 22.9%.

During 2012, the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity, given the fact that Japan appears to be a couple of decades ahead of Europe in terms of fiscal, social and economic 'experience', it is vitally important to exchange best practices with Japan to examine the challenges posed by an ageing population and how best these can be met by businesses and other interested parties.

To enable an essential exchange of best practices and share experience, the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee, together with the [EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Co-operation](#) and the [EU Institute in Japan Kansai](#), organised a conference entitled “**Ageing Populations and New Opportunities for Businesses in Europe and Japan**” on 15 March 2012.

The event was hosted by the President of the Employers' Group, Mr. Henri Malosse, following the initiative of Ms Eve Päärendson, Employers' Group Vice President in charge of external relations, and President of the EESC Contact Group on Japan.

The opening by Ambassador Norio Maruyama from the Mission of Japan to the EU was followed by presentations from speakers, including European stakeholders and enterprises, Japanese authorities, companies and research institutions.

Some key points in the presentations included:

- statistics show that Japan will feel the ageing issue more sharply than Europe; by 2030 elderly people will represent 23.7% (1:4 people) in the EU and 31.8% (1:3) in Japan.
- an extra year of *healthy* life expectancy increases the wealth of the whole society and so positively impacts job creation; elderly people create business opportunities for the healthcare, labour, tourism, financial services, ICT, robotics, and nutrition sectors
- ageing populations can benefit firms by being a driver of innovation,

- staff-related challenges connected to elderly workers can be tackled by innovative solutions to retain elderly people in work and increase their productivity

- structural change would continue for the next decade: whilst the primary sector is likely to lose 2million jobs, there will be increases in employment levels in services (up 6million) distribution and transport and non-marketed services.

- to stimulate the stag-

nated economy, the Japanese Government introduced fiscal and monetary policies, but in vain; market deregulations and public sector reforms (e.g. privatisation of the Post and Highways) were also introduced, but were not always sufficient. What is needed is more stable and strong government.



Eve Päärendson

Sarah Dekkiche

Miki Kohara



Viliam Palenik Krzysztof Pater Brendan Burns



Tomo Nishimura Yuki Sekine

- it is **essential to change the preconception** that *older age brings new challenges* (limited or outdated new technology skills, with a diminished propensity to be innovative, creative or flexible), and to **focus on the value of older employees (wealth of experience, reliability and proven commitment)**.

- enabling careers to be extended requires a change of mindset, as well as active support from employers, and particularly solidarity between generations.

You can find the detailed report of the event, speakers' presentations and photos here:

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-ageing-business-europe-japan>



Ambassador Norio Maruyama Henri Malosse



Naoki Mitani Miki Kohara

MEMBERS' LIFE

Visit by Henri Malosse and Jean-Pierre Coulon to the Lycée Saint Louis Gignac Nerthe, 19 March

Henri Malosse, President of the EESC Employers' Group, and Jean-Pierre Coulon (Employees' Group - France) **visited final year students from the high school 'Lycée Saint Louis Gignac Nerthe'** (Marseille region), **which was selected as one of the 27 schools for the EESC initiative "Your Europe, Your Say"**. They debated for nearly three hours with the young people on current issues (financial crisis, EU enlargement, the future of Europe, federalism, rising nationalism etc.) and shared their commitment to a stronger and fairer Europe. They **promised to return to see the students after three of them participate in the "Your Europe, Your Say 2012" on 26-28 April, to assess the initiative's impact and to continue the debate which they began!**



Entrepreneurship Lessons of Madi Sharma and Alfredas Jonuska for Youths in Siauliai, Lithuania, 14 March

The FIX'12 (**F**uture **I**deas **eX**periments) Youth Entrepreneurship Competition took place in North Lithuania between 22 February and 14 March 2012. 150 students accepted the invitation by Siauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and Siauliai University to show their creativity and entrepreneurship skills. **Madi Sharma, member of the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee participated in the final competition by the invitation of colleague Alfredas Jonuska.**

FIX'12 is an idea-generating competition in which students from universities, vocational schools and high school **students interested in business interact with experienced entrepreneurs and gain practical experience** through performing problem-solving tasks. The competition was organised in 4 segments. The young people were required to solve problems and present innovative ideas, which was moderated by representatives of Lithuanian companies. The teams could choose one of the tasks and presented marketing strategies, tackling economic and legal

aspects. Knowledge „suppliers“ for the Youth entrepreneurship competition were business owners, senior managers of companies and organisations, and experienced business professionals. Most of them are members of senior advisors-expert network at Siauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts. The networks' purpose is to match retired or semi-retired executives and professionals with entrepreneurs or youth seeking expert help or advice.

Creation of senior advisors networks is one of the focal points of the project Best Agers (<http://www.best-agers-project.eu/>). When a business is at the seed stage of its life-cycle, help of experts is invaluable.

Madi Sharma observed an idea-generating process and communicated with youth at the final of the Youth entrepreneurship competition FIX'12.

„The most important thing in creating a business or succeeding in one's career is confidence and trust in yourself“ stressed Madi in her speech „7 billion ideas to Action to Change the World“.



In fact, Madi Sharma and other members of the EESC **will participate in a live debate on entrepreneurship on 29 March, at the European Parliament, between 14:30 and 16:00, with the Commission, the Parliament, the Council of Europe, the Committee of the Regions, civil society stakeholders and real entrepreneurs.** The ambition is to involve all the EU institutions in this debate and particularly the EESC as this **concept originated from the INT/519 opinion (Entrepreneurship as an exit to the financial crisis), entrepreneurship opinions in general, the Young European Entrepreneurs Seminar and the New Idea Sopot Conference.**

The purpose of the debate will be *to create more entrepreneurs* and to build on Jean Monnet's idea to create a strong European Union with growth and prosperity for all. Jean Monnet, the founder of the European Union, was an Entrepreneur! He had an idea and he turned it into an action... In Ms Sharma's words, "We need to stop talking about austerity and challenges and we need to start talking about opportunities, solutions and concrete proposals!"

To participate, please contact:
events@EntrepreneurEnvoy.org or madi@madi.uk.com

We are looking for concrete proposals how to better promote entrepreneurship across Europe. The debate will also be web-streamed on www.EntrepreneurEnvoy.org across the EU and beyond. Each speaker will get 3 minutes maximum.

On the background of the financial crisis in Europe, only recently were talks of austerity complemented by talks on investment, as a way out of the crisis. Recognizing the role of entrepreneurs in channelling such investment for economic recovery, a group of dedicated entrepreneurs decided to create the Entrepreneur Envoy Portal.

The web portal www.EntrepreneurEnvoy.org unites, supports and recognizes entrepreneurialism in all its forms. This portal recognizes entrepreneurship in all its guises and will break away from the pre-defined stereotypes. It is driven by the idea that entrepreneurship must be looked at from a broader perspective than the traditional viewpoint of individuals creating and developing businesses for economic purposes and profit.

Inventiveness, creativity and innovation at group, enterprise or society level does not come down to the simple sum of the entrepreneurship mind-set of the individuals they consist of. Therefore the levels of development of entrepreneurship should be differentiated. Through the promotion of entrepreneurship the goal is to bring 7 billion ideas to fruition by working individually or collectively so that solutions can be found socially, environmentally and economically for as many on the planet as possible.

I hope you could join us on this occasion to share your view and meet and listen to other European entrepreneurs.

MEMBERS' LIFE

Brenda King at the Africa, Crosswords of the South-South Cooperation forum, 7-10 March

The Crans Montana Forum held its annual event, entitled “**Africa, Crosswords of the South-South Cooperation**” in Brussels between 7 and 10 March 2012, and **covered topics ranging from *The Increasing Role of Africa in S-S Cooperation to Africa, a Key part of World Security***.

Speakers included Kenya's Prime Minister Mr. Raila Odinga, Mr. Didier Reynders, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jianhua Zhong, China's Special Representative on African Affairs, Mr. Nick Westcott, EEAS and Dr. Jamie Shea, NATO.

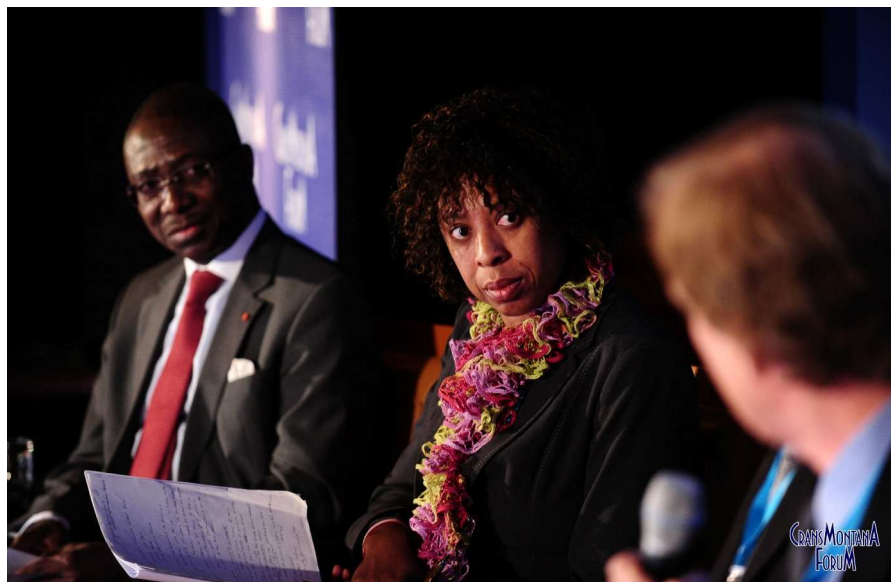
Ms Brenda King, Employers' Group member and President of the EESC's ACP-EU Follow-up Committee, participated in the session entitled: Africa: It's Time to talk about Competitiveness along with Mr. Aliko Dangote – Chairman Dangote Group Nigeria, Mr. Jean-Louis Ekra – President, African Export-Import Bank and Mr. Olivier Griffith – International Finance Corporation.

Her presentation was largely based on the African Competitiveness Report, produced annually by the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. The key points included:

Africa must diversify its products and markets to increase its share of world trade. Areas that constrain diversification include **poor logistics and infrastructure**, the inability to absorb technology and the issue of access to land. **Limited availability of skills** is a huge barrier with university enrollment at just 6%. This compares with 30% in many EU countries and 21% in China.

Africa has the highest amount of female entrepreneurs than any other region in the world however these women are **concentrated in informal, micro, low-growth and low-profit areas**. To increase its competitiveness African needs to **build their human capital** to enable them to move into higher value, high growth sectors so that they can move into the formal economy.

Fostering competitiveness is not solely the responsibility of governments as NSAs have a role to play. The importance of **dialogue between Government, business and civil society to track needed measures**, progress made and to share good practice was highlighted.



Jean-Louis Ekra

Brenda King

Olivier Griffith

Jonathan Peel speaks at a European Forum for Manufacturing Round Table with Commissioner De Gucht, 29 February

Jonathan Peel, Employers' Group member and President of the EESC WTO and International Trade Permanent Study Group, spoke at a major EU industry-related trade event in February 2012, raising the Group's and the EESC's profile as a key contributor on trade matters.

decision to start negotiating a specific bilateral agreement on Investment. Mr. Peel said, "**Trade and Investment cannot be easily separated in China as some 50% of Chinese exports come from foreign companies investing there**".



Commissioner Karel De Gucht



Jonathan Peel

Mr. Peel joined the Trade Commissioner, Karel De Gucht, as part of a strong line-up of speakers in the European Parliament on 29 February 2012 to discuss international trade issues for manufacturing. The Round Table, organized by the European Forum for Manufacturing, was chaired by Malcolm Harbour MEP (UK, ECR), recently reappointed as President of the European Parliament's Internal Market Committee. Other MEPs who spoke included Pablo Zalabidegain, MEP (ES, EPP), Vice-President of the Economic & Monetary Affairs Committee, who dealt with Mercosur, and Daniel Caspary, MEP (D, EPP) a key Member of the International Trade Committee, who spoke about Public Procurement policies.

Jonathan Peel spoke on "**Priorities for Trade with China**", pointing to the success of the **EU-China Round Table**, which has discussed trade and investment issues on several occasions. He **welcomed the Commissioner's reference to the recent EU-China Summit**

He pointed to many of the issues facing foreign investors in China, regularly highlighted by the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, which Group I Members of the Round Table have met on several occasions.

Many later remarked that Commissioner De Gucht was taking notes as **Jonathan also covered the need to work closely with China both over finding common Standards and over the sourcing of energy and raw materials.** In his own speech, Mr. De Gucht underlined that **China should not be seen as a threat**, comparing many current issues with those that arose with Japan in the 1980s. He also spoke about progress in the various EU trade negotiations, as well as the **prospect of an "early harvest" of part of the Doha negotiations, particularly Trade Facilitation**, echoing the point made by Mr. Lamy to the EESC's Trade Group earlier in the month that **success here could bring more than 50% of the impact of full trade liberalization.**

MEMBERS' LIFE

Speech by Jean-Pierre Haber on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) during the February Plenary Session of the EESC, 22 February



Jean-Pierre Haber (FR)
Delegate of Group I

Jean-Pierre Haber is an Employers' Group Delegate to the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI). In his speech during the 478th Plenary Session of the EESC on 22 February 2012, Mr. Haber explained: "The **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)**'s original aim to mitigate the adverse effects of globalization in terms of employment since 2009 has been expanded to cover the effects of the crisis. It has since proved itself to be functional, with a re-employment rate of 40% after intervention of the Fund, which is satisfactory."

He continued: "we therefore regret the recent attitude of some Member States which, in the Council, have blocked the extension of the GEF in times of crisis. The crisis continues. So the Fund should be used intensively and the performance increased beyond the twenty cases which are currently treated every year. This is primarily an emergency fund, intended to address exceptional situations. It should thus be sufficiently flexible, visible and well monitored".

Other key points included:

- the lengthy procedures at Member State, Regional, Commission and Budget Authority level should be addressed; there is ample room for improving the 18-month deadlines
- dispersion should be eliminated (targeting workers in industry and services). Due to pressure from European trade authorities and under the pretext of credit optimization, we include farmers as 'victims' of globalization, which is an illusion
- industry and services should not be paid with the planned reduction of CAP credits. The 500 million earmarked for industry and services must be optimized or even increased in five years
- we must anticipate the departure of employees, workers, independents, and the micro-entrepreneurs, in conjunction with sectoral councils. Some very small enterprises (VSEs) are struggling to survive.

In his conclusion, Mr. Haber stated: "The regions should be more closely involved throughout the process and promote trans-regional or trans-national solutions. **In order to make the European economy's factors of production more competitive, and to properly use our human resources, genuine social management is necessary, instead of a politically motivated and bureaucratic tinkering of existing procedures. This will quickly see a return rate of 50%, through a positive learning effect among EGF providers.**

Jan Simons speaks on Services of General Interest at the CEEP Conference "Change in Public Services", 16-17 February

Jan Simons, Member of the Employer's Group and Spokesman of the EESC's Transport Category, is **presently also heavily involved in "Services of General Interest" (SIG), commonly known as Public Services**, a confusing concept.

In the field of transport the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and secondary legislation **regulates to our satisfaction on a sectoral basis; it is an example** for all other sectors.

Mr. Simons shared: "**After many years there is, due to the efforts of President**



Jan Simons (NL)
Member of Group I

Henri Malosse, finally a Group I rapporteur for an opinion on a Commission Communication on SIG-quality".

Jan Simons actively convinces internal and external stakeholders, as in the 16-17 February 2012 CEEP conference "Change in Public Services", that the **sectoral approach is the only way to ensure that EU citizens benefit from indispensable services. "European SIG's, some colleagues say, are legally, politically, economically and financially not feasible in the foreseeable future and there is therefore no social approach to them".**

FOR YOUR AGENDA (SAVE THE DATE)

UPCOMING EVENTS OF GROUP I:

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| - Workshop of the Employers' Group on the Fashion Industry _____ | 13/04/2012, 09:30 – 15:30 |
| - Public Hearing of the Employers' Group on Business Ethics _____ | 19/04/2012, 10:00 – 13:00 |
| - Meeting of the EESC Bureau members of Group I _____ | 24/04/2012, 10:00 – 12:30 |
| - Meeting of the Group I Bureau _____ | 25/04/2012, 09:00 – 10:00 |
| - Group I meeting _____ | 25/04/2012, 10:00 – 13:00 |
| - Meeting of the EESC Bureau members of Group I _____ | 22/05/2012, 10:00 – 12:30 |
| - Meeting of the Group I Bureau _____ | 23/05/2012, 09:00 – 10:00 |
| - Group I meeting _____ | 23/05/2012, 10:00 – 13:00 |

THE MARCH PLENARY

OPINIONS PRESENTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EMPLOYERS' GROUP
DURING THE PLENARY SESSION OF 28-29 MARCH 2012:

ECO/300 - Specific problems facing islands
and

NAT/536 - Removal of sharks' fins on board vessels by **José María ESPUNY MOYANO**

ECO/304 - Double taxation in the single market by **Vincent FARRUGIA**

ECO/319 - The future of the European Union Solidarity Fund
and

SOC/429 - Modernisation of higher education by **Joost VAN IERSEL**

INT/600 - Common European sales law and A common European sales law to facilitate cross-border transactions
in the single market by **Ana BONTEA**

INT/605 - Annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of
undertakings by **Paulo BARROS VALE**

INT/619 - Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (2014-2020),
Co-rapporteur **Brendan BURNS**

TEN/475 - Airport package (Allocation of slots at airports / common rules, Noise-related operating restrictions at
Union airports, Airport policy – growth, connectivity and sustainable mobility and Ground-handling services at Un-
ion airports) by **Thomas McDONOGH**

TEN/476 - Implementation and exploitation of European satellite navigation systems by **Thomas McDONOGH**

Members of Group I have presented amendments to opinions, most notably the amendments:

by **Stefano Mallia** (on the opinion ECO/309 - System of own resources of the EU),

by **Christian Ardhe** and **Stefano Mallia** (on the opinion ECO/321 - Financial transaction tax),

by **Jonathan Peel** (on the opinion REX/349 - Civil society involvement in the EU's development policies),

by **Vladimira Drbalová**, **Irimi Pari** and **Christa Schweng** (on the opinion SOC/427 - Integration of third-
country nationals) and by **Philippe de Buck** (on the opinion SOC/438 - Erasmus for all).



GROUP I INTERNAL

Newsletter of the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee

Address:

European Economic and Social Committee
Employers' Group
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The Employers' Group of the EESC

The Employers' Group (Group I) has 114 members, and is made up of entrepreneurs, employers and representatives of employer associations working in industry, commerce, services and agriculture in the 27 Member States of the European Union. These are women and men involved in the business world and in touch with the realities of everyday life who are willing to put their experience to use to further the European venture.

Our goal is to promote European integration by supporting the development of our businesses, which play a key role in fostering the prosperity of our societies and in creating jobs.

In an economically difficult climate, the Euro-

pean Economic and Social Committee is the only European institution that brings together business people and people fully engaged in the economic and social life of their home country.

A strong, coherent and dynamic Employers' Group is therefore crucial to making the voice of business heard at European level.

Naturally, the Employers' Group also works closely with the five major European business organisations – BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP, EUROCHAMBRES, EuroCommerce and UEAPME – to which a large number of our members also belong.



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMITTEE

EMPLOYERS' GROUP