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Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks

APRIL 2016



I have often insisted that it is high time for the EU to demonstrate its willingness and capacity to be close to European citizens and to defend social rights, particularly in times of crisis. The EESC has warmly welcomed the invitation from the Commission President, Mr. Juncker to contribute to the establishment of a European Pillar of Social Rights, a set of principles that will support efficient and fair labour markets and welfare systems. The EESC has already prepared an ambitious work programme that aims to present an opinion for adoption in October 2016.

Considering the scale of the ongoing refugee crisis, the loss of human life in the Mediterranean – and elsewhere – and the agreement that the Council of the EU has concluded with Turkey, I would like to emphasise that Europe should invest in a human rights-oriented approach instead of an approach exclusively focussing on interests. The EESC has already conducted 12 fact-finding missions to examine the conditions of refugees in EU Member States and Turkey. All mission reports trace and clearly demonstrate the remarkable commitment and hard work of civil society geared towards alleviating the pain suffered by refugees and covering their basic needs. The response of civil society and the cross-border cooperation of volunteers and civil society organisations challenge the nationalist approach of closed borders that many Member States tend to adopt. Indeed, civil society has put solidarity into practice. It is time to follow civil society's lead.

Join us on 31 May and 1 June 2016 for our [Civil Society Days 2016](#), when we will discuss these topics with the institutions, decision makers, academics and activists from civil society organisations.

Georges DASSIS
EESC President
Co-chair of the [Liaison Group](#)

News from the Liaison Group

[Civil Society Days : Living together in our Europe](#)

31 May – 1 June 2016, EESC, Brussels

The Civil Society Days are a symbol of the cooperation between the EESC and the members of its Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks.

This year, it will focus on migration and on how Europe can be made more open and adapt to what seems to be a structural change. Three themes will be debated in detail: the balance between security and freedom, integration and inclusion as well as the causes of migration.

News from the CSO members of the Liaison Group



24 years of EU Citizenship - what we stand to lose

18 May 2016, Brussels

The conference, organized by the [European Citizen Action Service](#) (ECAS), will analyse the main achievements and challenges of EU citizenship in the context of current political developments and nearly 25 years after the concept of EU citizenship was first enshrined in the EU Maastricht Treaty.

YO!Fest 2016 at the European Youth Event (EYE2016)

20-21 May 2016, European Parliament, Strasbourg

The YO!Fest is an annual political youth festival organised by the [European Youth Forum](#) in symbolic places of the European Institutions. It combines high-level political debates, thematic workshops, educational activities, live music and artistic performances creating a unique, fun and meaningful experience of participation.

It aims to put youth issues at the forefront of the political debate, engage with young people and demonstrate the positive contribution youth organisations make to society. Set up just outside the European Parliament, the YO!Village will be a vibrant, interactive and sustainable space for 7000 participants aged 16-30 to meet, share and debate with each other as well as decision-makers.



LLLPlatform annual conference

31 May – 1 June 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia

Imagining the future is not a dream, it is about facing today's challenges and those of the future. This requires collective commitment and solidarity, and that is exactly what the LLLPlatform's Annual Conference 2016 is about.

Gathering some 150 experts and practitioners in education from all over Europe, the conference will be an opportunity to share practices from all over Europe to learn from each other and build

creative solutions. It will encourage participants to build partnerships to meet Europe's most pressing challenges. Discover the [Programme](#), [Speakers](#), how [Architecture and Education](#) will get together to design the learning community of tomorrow... [Register now](#)

Past events



**European
Movement
International**

Can Europe Make us Feel Safe?

5 April 2016, Brussels

The [European Movement International](#) organised a debate on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in the aftermath of the Brussels attacks. In a changing global security environment and at a time of multiple challenges and threats at its borders, can Europe make us feel safe? What needs to be done to promote cooperation among Member States and to foster the security of EU citizens?

In time for the presentation of a global security strategy at the June European Council, the European Movement International has published its new Policy Position paper on Security. It argues that the European Union offers the best forum for cooperation on defence and security issues and proposes a set of elements necessary in order to develop a common and effective European security response, and highlights the areas that should be addressed in the Global Strategy. [Read the document.](#)

European Rural Agenda

19 April 2016, Brussels

The European Commission should launch an in-depth debate aiming for a better underpinning of rural policy after 2020. This need is made explicit in the call for a 'White Paper on Rurality' initiated by the European Countryside Movement and now taken up by numerous other bodies. Such a White Paper is an essential means of starting a real, broad-based debate on rurality, with a view to a rural agenda for inclusion in the post-2020 programming period.



The conference is an important step towards taking more account of rural areas in future EU policies, and is co-organised by the international association Ruralité-Environnement-

Développement and the Committee of the Regions, in partnership of the European Rurality Movement.

[AV Audience Development Meeting 2016](#)

21-22 April 2016, Brussels

AVnode LPM 2015 > 2018 is a cooperation project aiming to promote and develop live video culture to European and worldwide audiences with partners from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom.



Organising 14 events per year, the [AVnode LPM 2015 > 2018](#) project gave special attention to audience development activities and strategies. The purpose was to help European artists and cultural professionals to reach as many people as possible across Europe with their work, as well as to extend access to cultural works to under-represented groups.



News from the EESC

[EESC reports on refugee crisis](#)

In December 2015 and January 2016, EESC delegations visited eleven EU Member States to meet civil society organisations working with migrants in order to identify the problems, needs, failures, success stories and best practices of the various actors in the current refugee crisis with the final aim of providing input to EU policy making.

As part of its reflections on EU migration strategy, the [EESC published a report based on fact-finding country visits](#) and meetings with more than 180 stakeholders, mainly from civil society organisations actively working with refugees and migrants. The report was presented during the EESC's March Plenary session, in the context of debates on the EU's external policy and migration with **EU High Representative Federica Mogherini** and Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos**.

Past events

A poster for ECI DAY 2016. At the top, it features the European Economic and Social Committee logo and a stylized graphic of people holding hands. Below this is a banner with colorful silhouettes of people. The main text reads "ECI DAY 2016 Forging Change" in large, bold letters, with the date "20.04.2016" to the right. At the bottom, it says "In partnership with" and lists several partner logos: Committee of the Regions, ECAS, Democracy International, IRI, and University of Liverpool.

The annual event dedicated to the [European Citizens' Initiative](#) (ECI) - an instrument for participatory democracy at European level - gathered around 150 participants. This year, it was dedicated on how to make an ECI as effective as possible, regardless of whether it is successful, and the help available to organisers.

[EESC plenary session:](#) **opinions and debates relevant to Civil Society Organisations**

- [Debate on the Energy Union initiative](#), in conjunction with the adoption of the TEN/580 and REX/459 opinions, with **Maroš Šefčovič**, vice-president of the European Commission responsible for the Energy Union
- EESC opinion on [State of the Energy Union](#) (TEN/580)
- EESC exploratory opinion on [External dimension of the EU's energy policy](#) (REX/459)
- [Circular economy package](#) (NAT/676)
- EESC exploratory opinion on [Fairer labour mobility within the EU](#) (SOC/531)
- All adopted EESC opinions can be consulted [here](#)

EEC Legislative programme (received referrals allocated to Sections in April 2016)

- For details on [received referral](#) as well [expected referral](#) and [exploratory opinion](#) click [here](#)
- Are you interested in getting information or in bringing input to one of the opinions? Do not hesitate to contact the relevant [Section secretariat](#)

EEC Studies

- [The Influence of Lifespan Labelling on Consumers](#)
- [The crisis and the evolution of labour relations in the United Kingdom](#)

EEC Newsletter

- Newsletter of [Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment](#) (NAT) Section



Civil dialogue in the EU



Forum for Young Professionals **Europe Lab**

[Europe Lab Forum for young professionals](#)

21-24/07/2016, Zagreb and Vukovar, Croatia

The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum invites young professionals aged between 25 and 35 from the EU, Russia and other European states to apply for the 2nd edition of the "Europe Lab" Forum for Young Professionals (supported by the European Commission).

Europe Lab is a unique communication and exchange platform for change makers from all over Europe working in public administration, business, NGOs, universities, think tanks, and other fields of professional engagement. Please [apply before 1 May 2016](#) .

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