



**Agriculture ■ Rural Development ■ Environment**

➤ N°.3 ■ April 2012 ■ Newsletter of the NAT Section ■ [www.eesc.europa.eu/nat](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/nat)

**ADOPTED OPINIONS**  
APRIL 2012

Opinions that were adopted on the 10 April NAT Section meeting

■ **7th Environmental Action Programme, follow-up to the 6th EAP**

On request of the Danish Presidency, the EESC was asked to draw up an exploratory opinion on the 7th Environmental Action Programme and follow up on the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

➤ <http://bit.ly/HrhWcS>

■ **CAP towards 2020**

The EESC expresses its views on the reform proposals of the Common Agriculture Policy.

➤ <http://bit.ly/LY0y3J>

■ **Establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)**

The LIFE Programme is one of the EU's main sources of environmental financing, which has produced very positive results over the last 20 years.

➤ <http://bit.ly/Mc8qR4>

■ **Promotion of sustainable production and consumption in the EU (exploratory opinion)**

On request of the Danish Presidency, the EESC has assessed the instruments and measures needed to shift to sustainable modes of production and consumption.

➤ <http://bit.ly/Ho8o10>

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

17 APR 2012  
FOOD SECURITY STUDY GROUP  
1st meeting of the Permanent Study Group

24 APR 2012  
CONFERENCE  
Cooperatives practices in the food chain  
(in partnership with COGECA and EUROCOOP)  
➤ <http://bit.ly/GX7dFc>

3 MAY 2012  
SDO MEETING  
Sustainable Development Observatory

3-5 MAY 2012  
CONFERENCE (JURMALA- KAUNAS)  
Latvian/Lithuanian Conference on implications of CAP inequality  
➤ <http://bit.ly/Jw2F8t>

11 MAY 2012  
MEETING OF THE NAT SECTION

11 MAY 2012  
PUBLIC HEARING  
Role of women in agriculture and rural areas  
➤ <http://bit.ly/KXBSE3>

12 MAY 2012  
EESC OPEN DOORS DAY  
Special focus: Green Europe & Rio+20  
➤ <http://europa.eu/festivalofeurope/>

31 MAY 2012  
INAUGURATION OF THE BEEHIVES  
Inauguration of the EESC/COR beehives

## PLENARY SESSION

Find the summary of the opinions adopted during the last plenary session

➡ <http://bit.ly/Hlwm0C>

## DOCUMENTS & INFOS

▪ Mario Campi - "The future of social agriculture"

➡ <http://bit.ly/JiJEHJ>

▪ European Court of Auditors, "Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa" - **Special Report No 1/2012**

➡ <http://bit.ly/HOW2PX>

## EESC OPEN DOORS DAY

Come and visit the Committee on 12th May

welcome - bienvenue - welkom



As all other European Institutions, the European and Social Committee will open its doors to all citizens on 12th May. The main topic of this year is **the challenges of sustainable development**, with the flagship theme of the Rio+20 conference.

Visitors will have the opportunity to take up the challenges set by our "sustainable development" expedition, by overcoming trials based on themes of urban life, green economy, management of renewable energy and water management.

➡ <http://bit.ly/J7Man4>

## DO YOU KNOW THAT...

The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have recently been awarded EMAS and ISO14001 certifications. This is an illustration of the coherence between our Committees' administrations and their political commitment to sustainable development. It highlights our exemplary role vis-à-vis other administrations and the public.

Since 2008, both Committees have committed to set up an environmental management system compliant with the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), in order to ensure that we operate in the most environmentally-friendly way possible. For example, **they have been able to reduce their electricity consumption by 16 % and their gas consumption by 28 % compared with 2008.**

➡ <http://bit.ly/OcoOLz>



The NAT Section on the EESC-website

➡ <http://eesc.europa.eu/nat>

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

## LIFE PROGRAMME INTERVIEW

Since its creation, in 1992, the LIFE programme has been one of the EU's main sources in support of the climate and the environment. The European Commission has recently made a proposal to continue the programme for the period 2014-2020 and introduced some significant changes. We had a chat with Pedro Narro, member of the NAT section, who was the rapporteur for the recent opinion on the LIFE Programme.

**What are the main innovations in the European Commission's proposal for the LIFE programme for 2014-2020? Are there significant changes?**

Although the principles and the essence of the programme remain the same, the Commission proposes two significant changes at a critical moment for the LIFE programme, which will rightly give it further funds. **First, the Commission will create a new "climate action" sub-programme**, a key instrument to raise the profile and effectiveness of climate governance and the fight against climate change. **Secondly, the Commission proposes a new model of "integrated projects"**, large-scale projects going beyond a single region, which will serve as a catalyst to attract national or EU funds (...)

**Your opinion mentions the need to simplify the bureaucratic formalities of the programme. In concrete terms, what does that refer to?**

Most of the organisations that participate in this type of project complain that bureaucracy slows things down and frequently makes their participation in the programme more difficult. **Despite the significant advances that have been made, further simplification of the financial forms is needed**, as well as better advice before the submission of the application, a strengthened role for the national contact points, more effective coordination between national and EU bodies, greater transparency as to the admission criteria and greater promotion of the programme. (...)

**There is a reference in the opinion to the change in the co-financing rules which involves a certain amount of puzzlement (...) Will that create an obstacle for the participation of smaller organisations?**

The decision to remove VAT and staff costs from the eligible costs is connected to the European Commission's new philosophy, which aims at removing those eligible costs which are generally more complex or which create greater practical problems. **The EESC does not share this vision. It is not sufficient to increase co-financing to "compensate" for the removal of certain eligible costs. [...] The current proposal would make it very difficult for many small organisations with limited resources, such as NGOs and SMEs, to participate in the programme on the terms set out.**

■ The full interview can be read here:

➡ <http://bit.ly/POvh5t>

CHECK OUT OUR PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS

➡ <http://bit.ly/GZXK4s>

To contact us by e-mail

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