This brochure is based on the 2014 Annual Activity Report issued in June 2015, which is – according to the Financial Regulation (art. 142) – the main annual tool used by the European Economic and Social Committee to report to the budgetary authority. The full report can be viewed here: http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/eesc-annual-activity-report-2014-en.pdf

2014 was the year that change became a reality for the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

First came the implementation of structural reforms aimed at strengthening the Committee’s consultative role, consolidating its position as an expert and reinforcing its local links by means of the Wind of Change programme. The aim of the programme was to anticipate referrals more effectively, enhance the strategic impact of own-initiative opinions, improve the follow-up to opinions, nurture local ties, bolster the Committee’s expert role by means of impact studies, and institute a project approach.

This newly-structured role for the Committee was then further strengthened at inter-institutional level by the cooperation agreement signed in February 2014 with the European Parliament, paving the way for a sustainable working relationship based on mutual cooperation. The agreement provides for the production of impact assessments for the Parliament, access for EESC members to the new European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and administrative cooperation in the area of translation.

In some respects, the three-way nature of the agreement with the EP also prepared the ground for the negotiation of the new administrative cooperation agreement between the EESC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR), which began in 2014 and would be completed in the course of 2015.

Lastly, in order to reflect the new working methods adopted by the members and the new backdrop of inter-institutional cooperation, I was given a mandate by the EESC Bureau to begin rethinking the administrative structure of the Committee and to set up bodies geared to these new fields of activity.

The new organisational structure would be put in place as of January 2015, ushering in a proactive approach to managing our resources and talent. This would enable the administration to adapt to the new challenges while continuing to fulfil its mission as effectively as before, both on a daily basis and for high-profile events.

This report reflects our work and that resolve to bring about change. It is a summary of the measures we have taken and the principles underpinning them, in line with the EESC’s mission.

Luis Planas
Secretary-General of the EESC
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INTRODUCING
THE EESC
WHAT IS THE EESC?

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is an advisory body of the European Union with its headquarters in Brussels. Since its establishment in 1957, the EESC has been a unique forum for consultation, dialogue and consensus among representatives of the various economic, social and civil components of organised civil society. The EESC has a distinctive place in the EU’s decision-making process, as a consultative body delivering opinions both to the ‘legislative’ (the European Parliament and the Council), and ‘executive’ (the Commission) arms. The EESC ensures that civil society organisations have a say in Europe’s development.

WHAT ARE THE EESC’S OBJECTIVES?

The EESC is committed to European integration. It strengthens the European Union’s democratic legitimacy by enabling national civil society organisations to express their views at the European level.

The Committee fulfils three key missions:

• Helping to ensure that European policies and legislation tie in better with economic, social and civic circumstances on the ground, by assisting the European Parliament, the Council and European Commission, making use of EESC Members’ experience and representativeness, and stimulating dialogue and efforts to secure consensus which serves the general interest of the EU;

• Promoting the development of a more participatory European Union which is more in touch with popular opinion, by acting as an institutional forum representing, informing, expressing the views of and securing dialogue with organised civil society;

• Promoting the values on which European integration is founded and advancing the cause of democracy and participatory democracy, as well as the role of civil society organisations, in Europe and across the world.
WHAT IS ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY?

Organised civil society describes a wide range of organisations, networks, associations, groups and movements which are independent from government and sometimes come together to take forward their common interests through collective action. These groups often act as intermediaries between decision-makers and citizens, and enable people to become actively engaged in efforts to improve living conditions.

HOW IS CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTED?

The EESC is made up of 353 Members from all 28 Member States. These Members are not politicians but employers, trade unionists and representatives of groups, such as professional and community associations, farmers, youth organisations, women’s groups, consumers, environmental campaigners and many more. They come from all social and professional backgrounds and have a vast range of knowledge and experience. They are not based full-time in Brussels but rather have their own jobs in their home countries, ensuring that they maintain direct contact with their grassroots. Nominated by their governments, they are appointed by the Council for a period of five years. They then work independently in the interests of all EU citizens. Debating issues involving and affecting civil society and adopting opinions, the Committee Members play an integral part in the process of policy formation and the preparation of decisions at EU level.

NATIONAL ALLOCATION OF SEATS

The EESC has 353 Members since Croatia joined the EU on 1 July 2013. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable five-year term of office. The latest renewal was in October 2010 for the mandate 2010-2015. The national allocation of seats, proportionate to the population, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain and Poland</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Sweden</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Finland</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus and Luxemburg</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*With the renewal of the EESC mandate as of October 2015 the number of members will be reduced to 350, as requested by the Lisbon Treaty.*
The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission are obliged, by virtue of the European treaties, to consult the EESC on a wide range of policy issues when passing new laws. The EESC examines proposals, draws up and adopts opinions based on a consensus reached between its Members. After they are adopted in plenary session, the opinions are sent to the European institutions and published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

In addition, the EESC can also adopt *own-initiative opinions* on any question pertaining to the European Union, its policies and how these might evolve. It also produces *exploratory opinions*, as requested by EU institutions, in spheres where they think it has the appropriate skills and expertise and which are of concern to citizens. The EESC may also publish *information reports* examining any aspect relevant to EU policies.

**THE LIFE CYCLE OF AN OPINION**

- **European Parliament, Council or Commission makes a REQUEST**
- **Bureau AUTHORISES work**
- **GROUPS appoint Rapporteur and Study Group Members**
- **DRAFING by Rapporteur, often assisted by Study Group**
- **DISCUSSION and adoption by sections**
- **RAPPORTEUR PRESENTS key findings and PROMOTES opinion at EU, Member State and local level**
- **ADOPTION by plenary**
- **OPINION is SENT to EU institutions and published in the *Official Journal of the European Union***

Each year, some **150** opinions are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* in the **24** languages of the Union.
HOW IS THE EESC ORGANISED?

EESC Members work in three groups: Employers (Group I), Workers (Group II) and Various Interests (Group III). The aim is to build consensus between all three so that EESC opinions reflect the economic and social interests of citizens. Jacek Krawczyk from Poland is President of the Employers’ Group; Giorgios Dassis from Greece is President of the Workers’ Group; while Luca Jahier from Italy is the President of the Various Interests Group.

The EESC has six sections, covering different aspects of the EU’s work, ranging from the economy to social affairs. Members participate in one or more of these sections depending on their areas of expertise, and it is here that much of the preparatory work on opinions is carried out. The EESC also has a Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI), which helps EU industry anticipate and adapt to the impact of globalisation. The EESC has also set up three specialist observatories – on the single market, the labour market and sustainable development – plus a steering committee for the EU’s 2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

EESC Section and other bodies’ Presidents

- Joost van Iersel, Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)
- Martin Siecker, Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)
- Dilyana Slavova, Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT)
- José Maria Zufiaur Narvaiza, Section for External Relations (REX)
- Maureen O’Neill, Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)
- Stéphane Buffetaut, Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)
- Carlos Trias Pintó, Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI)
- Stefano Palmieri, Europe 2020 Steering Committee
- Anna Maria Darmanin, Single Market Observatory
- Lutz Ribbe, Sustainable Development Observatory
- Christa Schweng, Labour Market Observatory

Every two and half years the EESC elects a Bureau made up of 40 Members, along with a President and two Vice-Presidents chosen from each of the three groups, in rotation. The President, who is currently Henri Malosse (Group I) from France, is responsible for the orderly conduct of the Committee’s business, and represents the EESC in relations with other institutions and bodies. The two Vice-Presidents – currently Jane Morrice (Group III) from the UK and Hans-Joachim Wilms (Group II) from Germany – are responsible for communication and the budget respectively. The Bureau’s main task is to organise and coordinate the work of the EESC’s various bodies and to lay down policy guidelines for this work.

The Committee has a secretariat, headed by a Secretary-General who reports to the President, representing the Bureau. Some 800 staff members work at the EESC, assisting Members in carrying out their duties.
The EESC ensures that European policies and legislation tie in better with economic, social and civic circumstances on the ground, by assisting the European Parliament, the Council and European Commission, making use of EESC Members’ experience and representativeness, promoting dialogue and efforts to secure consensus which serves the EU’s general interest.
COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A total of 61 opinions were adopted on referral from the European Parliament. Members and consultative staff actively participated in 98 EP Committee, Group, Inter-Group and individual meetings, with 28 meetings taking place between EESC/EP rapporteurs and Section-CCMI/EP Committee chairs. In total, some 139 meetings were held with representatives of the European Parliament.

COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Greek and Italian EU Presidencies formally requested seven exploratory opinions, which were all adopted. These were on the following topics:

- The European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
- Community Led Local Development
- European immigration policy
- European immigration policy and relations with third countries
- Youth employment measures
- Consumer protection and appropriate treatment of over-indebtedness
- The Europe 2020 Strategy towards the mid-term review

The EESC’s President, Section Presidents, the President of the Europe 2020 Steering Committee and various rapporteurs attended a total of 14 EU ministerial meetings covering:

- Single European Sky
- Energy policy
- Cohesion policy (both Greek and Italian Presidencies)
- Labour and environment
- Eastern Partnership
- Women’s empowerment
• Union for the Mediterranean
• Forced labour
• Industry
• Climate change
• Digital economy
• EU-Cariforum trade and development
• EESC post-2015 conclusions
• Cooperation under European partnership for agriculture and rural development

EESC Section and Group Presidents and rapporteurs actively participated in a variety of EU Presidency conferences covering topics such as:
• The mid-term assessment of the Europe 2020 Strategy
• 13th European Tourism Forum
• Unlocking the potential of the social economy for EU growth
• The European social charter
• Sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination
• Social policy/social quality
• Sustainable care system
• Health policy governance
• Migration
• The Eurofi high-level seminar 2014
• Future of the Economic and Monetary Union
• Reflections and proposals for the next term of the European Parliament and for the six-month Italian Presidency
• The Eurofi financial forum
• The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
• The 7th Programming Committee Meeting Interreg Europe
• Moving ahead towards an EU Urban Agenda
• Women’s socio-economic empowerment in the Euro-Mediterranean area
• Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

CONFERENCES, HEARINGS AND OTHER MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hearings (co)organised by the Directions of Consultative Work (DCW)</th>
<th>Conferences (co)organised by the Directions of Consultative Work (DCW)</th>
<th>Participation in formal/informal EU Ministerial meetings</th>
<th>Participation in high-level national, EU and international meetings, summits and conferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>525</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ministers, permanent secretaries, ambassadors and representatives of the EU Presidencies, Council and Member governments attended a variety of **EESC-organised conferences, debates and events** on topics such as:

- Europe 2020 Strategy
- Industrial policy
- Household over-indebtedness
- Social enterprise
- Migration
- Youth employment
- Maritime industries
- Energy, environment and climate
- Airport capacity
- EU energy policy
- Digital Agenda
- EU cohesion policy
- Financing for the real economy
- The role of tax policy in a functioning Economic and Monetary Union
- Community Led Local Development
- Macro-regional strategies across Europe
- ACP-EU meeting of economic and social actors
- EU-Central Asia Strategy
- Euromed summit of ESCs and similar institutions
COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The EESC adopted three exploratory opinions in 2014 that were specifically requested by the European Commission. These were on the following topics:

- Airport capacity in the EU
- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

The EESC co-organised with the European Commission and the City of Strasbourg a huge participatory event called ‘Social Entrepreneurs: Have Your Say!’ The two-day event took place on 16 and 17 January in Strasbourg, France. Cooperation with the European Commission on this topic intensified throughout 2014.

The EESC – through its Europe 2020 Steering Committee – has been heavily involved in discussions on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy as part of the mid-term review as well as the European Semester.

IMPACT STUDIES

In 2014, three ex-post impact studies were completed to critically assess the implementation and impact of EU legislation from the civil society point of view. These studies examined the following issues:

- ‘The working of the Services Directive in the Construction Sector’ – drawn up by the Single Market Observatory (SMO);
- ‘Implementation of EU policies for youth employment’ – drawn up by the Labour Market Observatory (LMO);
- ‘The role of civil society in the implementation of the EU Renewable Energy Directive’ – drawn up by the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO).
PROJECTS

Launched in 2013, the Committee’s ‘projects’ approach aims to transform certain recommendations – expressed through opinions – into concrete action, and involves the use of external partners and the combination of several instruments to achieve practical results.

In 2014, eight such projects were launched:

- Energy dialogue
- European medias
- Europe 2020 Strategy
- Platform of the EU outermost regions’ civil society organisations
- More Europe locally
- My Europe tomorrow!
- New attitudes towards consumption
- Negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the United States of America
The EESC promotes the development of a more participatory European Union, which is more in touch with popular opinion, by acting as an institutional forum representing, informing, and expressing the views of and securing dialogue with organised civil society.
CIVIL SOCIETY DAY 2014

Civil Society Day is an annual initiative organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the EESC Liaison Group with European civil society networks. The purpose of the Civil Society Day is to enhance political dialogue between the Committee and European civil society organisations, and to establish genuine structured civil dialogue with the European institutions. The topic for discussion of the Civil Society day held on 18 March was ‘Beyond agendas and manifestos: What Europe for us?’. The economic, social and civic aspects of European citizenship were at the centre of discussions which focused mainly on the expectations of Europeans. A key question was how to meet these expectations while at the same time maintaining European values and objectives, such as freedom, security, equality and sustainability.

SUPPORTING CITIZENS’ INITIATIVES

As an advocate of inclusivity, the right to participate and the voice of civil society, the EESC has always stood as a strong support of the idea of a citizens’ initiative from the beginning. It has invited spokespeople representing organisers of the European Citizens’ Initiatives (ECI) to present their projects, and the Committee has given them the floor at various partnership events to show its strong interest in this new democratic tool. The EESC has closely cooperated with other EU institutions and civil society partners to propose improvements in existing regulation and practice. This culminated in the annual conference – and ECI Day – held on 15 April, as well as a set of recommendations for the revision of the ECI Regulation planned by the European Commission for April 2015. The conference focused on the legal, technical and communication aspects of the ECI, to help petition organisers prepare for the challenge of collecting one million signatures in various Member States. The EESC also created a dedicated ad-hoc group to deal with ECI matters. One of the group’s proposals was to offer the Committee’s services for translating the ECI descriptions into all official EU languages (except Gaelic). This service is now available to all ECIs validated by the European Commission.
CONFERENCES AND DEBATES

The EESC has been instrumental in organising numerous high-level conferences designed to promote a more participatory EU that is in touch with public opinion.

Active inclusion and social investment

This conference, jointly organised with Eurofound on 16 June, was a follow-up up to two EESC opinions on social investment (SOC/481 and SOC/496). The conference underlined the need for integrated implementation of the three pillars of the active inclusion strategy (adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services), as defined in the Commission Recommendation of 2008, which concluded that the Social Investment Package of February 2013 was the main tool for achieving the social inclusion objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. As this package represents a paradigm shift from social spending to social investment, Member States were urged to apply a social investment approach to their social policies and the European institutions were requested to support and evaluate measures taken to this effect.

The post-2015 framework

On 13 and 14 February, the EESC organised a conference entitled ‘A new global partnership: European civil society positions on the post-2015 framework’. The event brought together more than 250 stakeholders and participants from a wide range of backgrounds to voice their positions on and debate the United Nations post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its underlying principles of integration and universality, priority themes it should address, its implications, and the transformations that will have to take place in our societies.

“The event brought together more than 250 stakeholders and participants from a wide range of backgrounds to voice their positions on and debate the United Nations post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development...
The conference was organised by the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) and the REX section at the request of the European Commission and prepared in broad partnership with civil society organisations and networks involved in the post-2015 debate. The conference conclusions and recommendations provided timely input to the Communication of the European Commission ‘A decent life for all’ of July 2014, which laid the ground for the EU position at the launch of the negotiations in 2014. The messages of the conference were presented at a side-event, organised by the SDO, at the Open-Working-Group on Sustainable Development Goals at the UN headquarters in New York.

### Social entrepreneurship

On 16 and 17 January, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Commission co-hosted a major participatory event on social entrepreneurship. Much more than a simple conference this special Strasbourg event was organised in an interactive way. For two days, the Palais des Congrès became a gigantic forum for meeting and exchange, where participants were able to share their experiences, express their concerns, and also relate their success stories. Participants gathered information and tackled multiple problems together.

### Collaborative consumption

‘Boosting partnerships in the collaborative consumption’ was the name of a conference co-organised by the EESC, the European Sharing Economy Coalition, OuiShare and ShareNL on 3 July. The event, held on the EESC’s premises, explored how stakeholders can forge partnerships to establish the necessary policy framework conditions and create an enabling environment for collaborative consumption to be a success for Member States, business, consumers and local communities in the EU. The conference was followed by a Sharefest, to define a series of initiatives in collaborative consumption that can help citizens in their daily life.

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**EVENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events organised by the EESC</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
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<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European Consumer Day

The 16th European Consumer Day, held on 14 March in Thessaloniki, Greece, featured the topic ‘Consumer protection and social inclusion in times of crisis’. A key message was that consumer rights are legally binding, and that even a long-lasting crisis cannot be used as an excuse for the lack of enforcement. In this context, fundamental questions were raised during the conference sessions: What challenges lie ahead for policy-makers in the field of consumer protection? Are enforcement bodies efficient enough, or are consumer rights just a mirage in these difficult times? How to fight over-indebtedness and financial exclusion?

Completing EMU

Following an important conference organised in Rome, a series of discussions were held between September and December in finance ministries in Paris and Berlin, in addition to a meeting at the European Central Bank with ECB Vice-President Vitor Constâncio, together with high-level EIB officials to discuss the need for completing EMU in order to overcome the crisis and promote growth and employment.

Industrial policy

A high-level conference focusing on European industrial policy was organised by the EESC together with the European Policy Centre (EPC) on 12 November. Taking place just a few months after the European Commission’s communication on fostering a European Industrial Renaissance and immediately after the new college of European commissioners had taken office, this conference examined the role of industrial policy in stimulating the European economy and the EU strategies needed to promote re-industrialisation.

Another conference, entitled ‘Fourth industrial revolution: An opportunity for the EU to take the lead?’, was organised on 14 November. This event focused on solutions that the EU has put forward to ensure that Europe is well placed to take advantage of this so-called fourth industrial revolution, which incorporates the Internet of Things and the Internet of Services.
Social inclusion and competitiveness

On 4 and 5 December, as part of the activities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Europe 2020 Steering Committee organised a high-level conference in Rome called ‘Towards a more effective Europe 2020: civil society’s proposals for boosting social inclusion and competitiveness in Europe’. During the conference, the EESC presented a major report, prepared in cooperation with its network of national economic and social councils (ESCs) and similar organisations on the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

FOSTERING ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY BEYOND OUR BORDERS

In 2014, EESC Members were also influential players at numerous high-level national, EU and international meetings, helping to promote European values and share civil society concerns. The Committee actively expanded its contacts and consultation with civil society organisations in third countries, through its well-established practice of involving civil society in the monitoring of different strands of the EU’s external policies. New areas for structured dialogue were opened with African economic and social stakeholders, Russian NGOs, Ukrainian civil society, and with Central America and Caribbean countries.

Key events included:
- First meeting of the EU-Africa network of economic and social stakeholders
- Joint meeting with the EU-Russia civil society forum
- Meeting of EU-ACP economic and social actors
- Preparatory meeting on the EU-Ukraine civil society platform with representatives of the Ukrainian side
- First meeting of the EU-Cariforum consultative committee
- First joint meeting of the EU and Central American advisory groups and civil society dialogue forum under the ‘Trade and sustainable development’ title of the Association Agreement with Central America
- Euromed summit of economic and social councils and similar institutions
COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS

The EESC successfully carried out a number of activities involving national ESCs – achieved despite budget cuts at the national level – and was also involved in a number of conferences in collaboration with several ESCs. The EESC was also instrumental in helping the presidency of the network of EU ESCs (France) to organise the annual meeting of Presidents and Secretaries-General on ‘The role of the ESCs and the expectations of civil society towards the European Union’. A CES data portal – ‘CESlink’ – linking the national ESC’s and EESC is operated by the EESC.
EESC Members from civil society organisations and representing diverse policy areas within the EU and the various institutions are offered a unique opportunity to air their views and shape the debate on future policy affecting all Europeans.
The EESC promotes the values on which European integration is founded, advancing in Europe and across the world the cause of democracy and participatory democracy, as well as the role of civil society organisations.
'Going Local' communication is an outreach activity performed by EESC Members and designed to give civil society a greater understanding of the work of the EESC and its role in the EU decision-making process.
‘GOING LOCAL, BEING LOCAL’

The EESC’s ‘Going Local, Being Local’ initiative is about fostering closer ties between the Committee and grassroots organised civil society. The aim is to strengthen the Committee’s responsiveness to the concerns of local economic and social interest groups. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, from Members speaking at local conferences and organising relevant meetings in Member States.

In 2014, the EESC organised 69 ‘Going Local’ events, with 100 EESC Members involved. This figure does not include the ongoing – and crucial – promotion of EESC opinions and impact assessments by sections and groups. A one-stop shop for ‘Going Local’ applications and evaluation was created, with the EESC’s Communication Department providing logistical support and promotional material for 41 internal events, 125 in-house partnerships and 88 events outside the EESC. The Communication Department also organised the annual exchange of best practice for communication contact points in Zagreb on 17 and 18 March. Lastly, in the run up to the European elections, a specific training course was organised for communication contact points under the Going Local initiative.

CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE

The objective of the Civil Society Prize is to reward excellence in civil society initiatives. The 2014 edition of the prize aimed to reward initiatives and projects dealing with the integration of Roma. A total of 81 applications were received, and winners were chosen from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Greece.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Cultural activities organised by the EESC’s Communication Department according to the guidelines approved by the EESC Bureau, aim inter alia to raise awareness about other EU Member States, especially cultural aspects in the countries holding the Presidency of the European Union. In 2014, several public exhibitions and events were dedicated to Greek and Italian culture. In all, ten exhibitions of various works of art (photography, painting, sculpture, handicrafts, etc.) and works of historical value (documents, letters), five meetings and literary presentations, two concerts (opera with pianists and singers) took place.
YOUR EUROPE, YOUR SAY!

‘Your Europe, Your Say!’, which has taken place in Brussels every year since 2010, mirrors the work done by EESC Members. Students, representatives of Europe’s youth, come to the EESC’s headquarters to debate, negotiate and reach consensus on topics that are of high priority to young people. Prior to the teachers and pupils coming to Brussels, EESC Members visited the schools in Member States. The 2014 EESC youth event focused on the European elections of May 2014.

The young people were asked to establish five priorities for what Europe should do to become a better place and be more relevant to its citizens. Their ‘action plan’ focused on education, languages, jobs and the environment. This project helps to increase young people’s awareness of the EESC and the EU, giving them a rare chance not only to speak out, but also to be heard!

HOSTING VISITORS IN BRUSSELS

In 2014, the EESC received almost 10 000 visitors, welcoming hundreds of groups from all over the world. They were mostly made up of members of civil society organisations and students specialising in European affairs. The inter-institutional Open Doors Day in May attracted an additional 2580 visitors to the Committee.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media activities were strengthened in 2014 in order to promote and communicate important EESC events. On-request tailored social media coaching sessions for specific teams were also established, while regular training sessions for Members continued throughout the year. The EESC also increased its social media audience in 2014, with the number of Facebook fans increasing from 5505 in 2013 to 7770 and the number of Twitter followers increasing from 8039 to 14 454.

MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS

The EESC strengthened its relations with the press. Around 150 journalists attended the EESC plenary sessions in 2014. Over 1330 press cuttings have been collected, which is an increase of 25% compared to the year before.
The EESC seeks to attract, train and retrain skilled staff, optimise the organisational structure and promote an environment which encourages work/life balance and is conducive to personal and professional development. Great efforts have also been made to adapt budgets to the constraints of the current exceptional financial and economic situation.
THE 2014 BUDGET

The EESC is fully aware that an accurate, efficient and accountable use of EU resources is one of the essential means to reinforce the trust of European citizens. The EESC’s 2014 budget totalled EUR 128.61 million. The EESC drafts its budget within the framework set by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission and strictly follows the Commission guidelines and indicators. The EESC has thus reduced and will continue to reduce its staff numbers by 1% per year over a period of five years and carry out other cost-saving measures contained in the reformed Staff Regulations. The EESC has thus also frozen and will continue to freeze its appropriations with the exception of staff salaries, which in line with the Commission guidelines, the EU’s legal obligations vis-à-vis its staff are taken into account.

**€128.61 million total budget**

1.19% less than 2013
HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources (HR) highlights of the year at the EESC

- Closer inter-institutional cooperation between the European Parliament and the EESC: both the EESC and the Committee of the Regions signed a cooperation agreement with the European Parliament. The HR Directorates of both committees led the implementation of the administrative section of the agreement.

- Closer inter-institutional cooperation with other EU institutions: contacts further developed mainly with regard to the implementation of the new Staff Regulations. The EESC also continued its close cooperation with the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) and held the presidency of the inter-institutional joint committee (COPARCO).

- Providing the administration with the tools to face future challenges: new organisational structure and implementing measures established for the Committee’s General Secretariat to enable the administration to provide better service to the institution and its Members.

- Fostering a culture of mobility within the EESC: internal mobility encouraged as a means of professional development; guidelines have been set and measures will be implemented to develop this culture of mobility, with appropriate career guidance and training support.

- Stronger HR forward planning and career guidance: the Directorate for Human Resources and Internal Services (DHR-IS) has continued to develop its forward-looking approach in the areas of workforce planning and organisational design, with a new unit being created within the Directorate in charge of HR Planning and Training (as of January 2015).

- Improved internal communication, social dialogue and relations with in-house partners: communication strengthened with different stakeholders by consolidating internal communication tools (HR TV, HR InfoPoint) and developing new activities (mentoring programme for newcomers, EESC induction day).

- Increased efficiency, flexibility and modernisation of administrative procedures: several activities carried out on the basis of continuous improvement and the need to adapt to budgetary constraints and staffing cuts. Examples include greater use of project teams, pooling of resources and computerised management via Sysper2 of a broader range of HR procedures.
HUMAN RESOURCES
KEY FACTS AND FIGURES FOR 2014

ESTABLISHMENT PLAN: POSTS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE BUDGETARY AUTHORITY
POSTS BY CATEGORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSTS</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>364 AD</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>356 AST</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL PERMANENTS: 685
TOTAL TEMPORARIES: 35
TOTAL 2013: 720

STAFF BY NATIONALITY (OVERALL)

Luxembourg 0

Belgium 140

Italy 68
Spain 57
France 51
Germany 39
Poland 31
Greece 30

Austria 12
Latvia 12
Lithuania 12
Estonia 13
Slovenia 14
Czech Republic 15
Sweden 15
Netherlands 18
Hungary 19
Bulgaria 19
Finland 19
Slovakia 19
Denmark 21
Romania 21
United Kingdom 21
Portugal 28

Others 2
Ireland 8
Malta 9
Croatia 10

The EESC has an exemplary gender balance across a wide range of functions and middle-management posts.

The competency framework helps to map and promote best practices, quality and better talent management within the EESC.
The EESC has an exemplary gender balance across a wide range of functions and middle-management posts.

**M/F DISTRIBUTION BY FUNCTION GROUP AD/AST**

**AD**
- AD women: 203
- AD men: 142

**AST**
- AST women: 254
- AST men: 124

**WOMEN:**
- 62.5% of staff (in all levels/categories)
- 37.8% of heads of unit
- 25% of senior managers

**OUR COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

**CORE VALUES**
- Professionalism
- Team spirit
- Flexibility

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**
- Interpersonal communication
- Working with others
- Service orientation

**PERSONAL QUALITIES**
- Sense of responsibility
- Commitment
- Sense of initiative
- Adaptability

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES**
- Specific knowledge required
- Handling information
- Problem-solving

**PERFORMING TASKS AND ACHIEVING RESULTS**
- Planning and organising
- Quality orientation
- Producing timely results

The competency framework helps to map and promote best practices, quality and better talent management within the EESC.
The aim of the CAF is to be the catalyst for a process of overall improvement in organisations. In particular, it aims to facilitate self-assessment in public organisations with a view to diagnosing and defining improvements, in the search for excellence.

ACHIEVING ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

In 2014, DHR-IS continued to take inspiration from the CAF exercise of 2013, which focused on the implementation of new working methods within the Directorate. The CAF is a management tool developed by and for the public sector. It is based on the assumption that leadership in the areas of strategy and planning – taking into account people, partnerships, resources and processes – radically improves organisational performance and relations with the public and with society at large. The aim of the CAF is to be the catalyst for a process of overall improvement in organisations. In particular, it aims to facilitate self-assessment in public organisations with a view to diagnosing and defining improvements, in the search for excellence.

EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

Like many private and public organisations, the EESC is working on reducing the carbon footprint and energy cost of its activities by continuously improving its environmental performance. These efforts over the last few years have borne remarkable results and earned the Committee a Brussels Ecodynamic Enterprise label in 2009. In late December 2011, the Committee achieved EMAS and ISO14001 certification.

Considerable progress has also been made on rationalising the use of paper. The management of applications and leave, for example, is now done electronically. Some of the most striking initiatives have been carried out in the field of mobility, with DHR-IS playing an active role. An enterprise travel plan (PDE) was developed to promote the use of greener modes of transport (public transport, walking and cycling in particular). For this, a series of activities were implemented and promoted and practical measures taken to encourage staff to take an active part in changing their behaviour.
USEFUL LINKS

EESC 2014 Annual Activity Report:

EESC website:
www.eesc.europa.eu

Facebook:
www.eesc.europa.eu/facebook

Twitter:
www.eesc.europa.eu/twitter

YouTube:
www.eesc.europa.eu/youtube

LinkedIn:
www.linkedin.com/company/european-economic-and-social-committee

Working with young people:
www.eesc.europa.eu/youth

Your Europe, Your Say!:
www.eesc.europa.eu/YourEuropeYourSay
European Economic and Social Committee

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