The European Economic and Social Committee at COP22
Introduction

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has been advocating for organised civil society and citizens at global, national and subnational levels to be fully involved in the development, review and, above all, implementation of the Paris Agreement. With the general framework agreed on at the COP21 in Paris, it is now also the role of non-state actors, including civil society, to work together to implement it. Multi-level and multi-stakeholder climate governance is the strong focus of our work in 2016 and beyond. We are concentrating our efforts on the identification of the mechanisms and measures for organised civil society to be truly involved and for climate action to deliver massively while proposing elements of a new climate governance infrastructure, emphasising the role of citizens and grassroots organisations.

The European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC is an advisory body in the institutional set-up of the European Union, representing organised civil society. With 350 members distributed among three groups (employers, workers and various interests), the EESC acts as a vibrant forum for European civil society dialogue – hence ensuring a broader democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union.

The EESC has been and continues to be very active on climate- and development-related issues closely following international negotiations linked to sustainable development in a broad perspective, in cooperation with other Economic and Social Councils and representatives of the United Nations’ Major Groups.
Key positions

The European Economic and Social Committee adopted its opinion on *The Road from Paris* in September 2016 and formulated a series of key messages for decision-makers:

• The Paris Agreement is a welcome global commitment to mitigate climate change. The task ahead is to ensure that the agreement is ratified, implemented and developed further. It is particularly critical to raise the ambition level of national commitments in order to comply with the long-term goal of limiting global warming “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”.

• In implementing the objectives set by the Paris Agreement, maximum use should be made of market mechanisms. A *global pricing system for carbon emissions* would be a neutral and effective way of bringing all market players on board.

• It is civil society partners that will bring about the shift to a carbon-neutral economy through their action on the ground, while the role of political decision-makers is to provide them with an *enabling environment and funding*, including awareness-raising on all available funding opportunities. A *multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance approach* has to be developed to facilitate civil society climate action and to remove obstacles to it.

• The Road from Paris to a carbon-neutral economy is extremely challenging. To manage the *transition in a just and controlled way*, and to help businesses and citizens adapt to the changes and develop new solutions and skills, proper adjustment measures have to be introduced as part of the climate strategy.

International coalition for climate multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance

Scaling up and mainstreaming of climate initiatives at local level are an essential part of the solution to the climate challenge. In 2016, the EESC and its partners¹ decided to work together to create a new *international coalition on climate dedicated to multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance*. A collaborative approach and bottom-up actions with the support of top-down measures are central to our work. In this context, in July 2016 the EESC adopted an opinion on *Building a coalition of civil society and subnational authorities to deliver commitments of the Paris Agreement*. It looks into the *conditions for success of the climate actions by non-state actors*, possibilities for scaling up and spreading of valuable initiatives as well as the potential *hurdles to be overcome*. Through this opinion, the EESC proposes to launch a broad coalition of politics, administration and civil society actors whose mission would be to *minimise obstacles standing in the way of civil society climate action*.

¹ European Committee of the Regions (CoR), the French Committee for Sustainable Development (Committee 21 France - C21F) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
The delegation of the European Economic and Social Committee to COP22:

- **Isabel Caño Aguilar**, member for the trade unions’ constituency, vice-chair of the EESC’s Sustainable Development Observatory and a member of the EESC since 2010. A teacher by profession, she is a member of the education section of the Spanish General Workers Union (UGT) and head of the UGT office in Brussels.

- **Stefan Back**, member for the employers and business constituency, has been a member of the EESC since 2010. Member of the EESC’s Sustainable Development Observatory and covering transport, energy and climate issues, he holds the position of Director of Sustainable Logistics in the Swedish Confederation of Transport Enterprises, and has a long career in transport policy, both at ministerial level in Sweden and in European organisations.

- **Michel Dubromel**, member for the various interests’ constituency, has been a member of the EESC since September 2015 and the co-spokesperson for the “Consumers and Environment” category. After an industrial career as a chemical engineer, he is now the Vice-President of France Nature Environnement (the largest environmental protection associations’ federation in France – with 3 500 member associations).

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