



STUDIES CARRIED OUT IN 2012

COMPENDIUM



European Economic and Social Committee
Communication Department



*European Economic and Social Committee
Communication Department*

Studies carried out in 2012

Compendium

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The impact of the crisis on civil society organisations in the EU – Risks and opportunities

This study addresses questions concerning civil society and how civil society organisations (CSOs) have been affected by the financial crisis in Europe. Through various data and sources, the authors reveal a diversity of responses from the broad field of civil society in Europe, and highlight key challenges and opportunities that have emerged for civil society in the light of the financial crisis. The study presents four specific areas in which the relationship between CSOs and political institutions and policymaking actors may be affected by the financial crisis: (i) funding (impact of austerity, budget cuts, alternative business models etc.); (ii) alliances, networks and other ways of having one's voice heard; (iii) new challenges and opportunities as regards interaction and cooperation between CSOs and governments; (iv) citizens' engagement in CSOs. The study concludes with a list of recommendations and proposals for specific opportunities for EESC members to engage with CSOs and facilitate improvements in the national (and European) decision making processes.

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Author: Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (IES-VUB);
Belgium
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Availability: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/admin?i=portal.en.publications.29836>
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The economic and social situation in the Baltic States – Estonia

This study highlights trends on the Estonian labour market during the years of rapid economic development and the subsequent economic crisis. The aim is to describe changes in the field of employment and unemployment, as well as the problems facing vulnerable groups (young people, older workers, non-Estonians, people from structurally weak regions) in relation to employment and unemployment. The text includes a description of Estonian labour market institutions and the measures implemented in the field of active and passive employment policy. In particular, the study focuses on new labour laws and changes introduced in response to the crisis. It also evaluates the contribution of social partners to framing employment policy. The last part of the text presents the lessons which can be learnt from Estonian labour market policy responses and adaptation to the economic crisis.

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EN: 978-92-830-2008-0
ET: 978-92-830-2009-7
FR: 978-92-830-2010-3
Languages: DE, EN, ET, FR
Pages: 24, 22, 20, 24
Author: Alari Purju; Tallinn Technical University; Estonia
Requesting service: Group II
Availability: Downloadable
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/admin?i=portal.fr.publications.27247>
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The economic and social situation in the Baltic States – Latvia

The study presents an overview of the economic and social situation in Latvia from 2004 to 2012. While Latvia had one of the world's fastest growth rates before recession, it has lost about a quarter of its GDP since the recession hit. The author examines the main causes of the recession, the measures taken by the government to combat it and their impact, the situation of the labour market, the impact of the crisis on the social security system and social dialogue, as well as trade union proposals for combating the effects of the recession. Finally, recommendations for a future economic development are provided.

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EN: 978-92-830-2016-5
FR: 978-92-830-2017-2
LV: 978-92-830-2018-9
Languages: DE, EN, FR, LV
Pages: 30, 25, 27, 21
Author: Jānis Kajaks, Latvian Confederation of Free Trades Unions (LBAS)
Requesting service: Group II
Availability: Downloadable
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/admin?i=portal.fr.publications.27260>
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The economic and social situation in the Baltic States – Lithuania

The study illustrates the economic and social situation in Lithuania over the last ten years. The authors present the state of the economy, demographic trends, developments in employment, labour market, economic and social policy, working and living conditions, as well as future prospects. In conclusion, recommendations are provided for a sustainable economic and social development of the country.

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Catalogue number: QE-30-12-150
ISBN: DE: 978-92-830-2011-0
EN: 978-92-830-2012-7
FR: 978-92-830-2013-4
LT: 978-92-830-2014-1
Languages: DE, EN, FR, LT
Pages: 20, 19, 21, 19
Author: Prof. Dr Boguslavas Gruževskis, Dr habil. Inga Blažienė; Lithuanian Social Research Centre; Lithuania
Requesting service: Group II
Availability: Downloadable
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/admin?i=portal.fr.publications.27270>
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The role of trade union organisations and the social partners in planning and monitoring economic and social cohesion policies in the new financial framework for 2014-2020

The study looks at the decisions taken on the EU budget in the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020. The authors examine the months of difficult negotiations that followed the period of financial crisis between 2007 and 2013, and focus specifically on the European Commission's report on the implementation of economic and social cohesion programmes over this period. They then recapitulate the objectives, budget and main principles that guided intervention in the previous programming period and explain the changes introduced in the new programme. The concluding chapters focus on the importance of more effective partnership with the social partners, arguing that they must be involved at all stages of the process of managing the Structural Funds, through dialogue and participation in the planning phase. The study then goes on to emphasise the considerable efforts that need to be made to formalise the various partnership procedures and develop the technical capacities of the trade union organisations. The authors add that providing technical assistance across the board is even more necessary, given that the partnership principle has to be extended.

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Languages: FR, EN
Pages: 50
Author: Syndex; France
Requesting service: Group II
Availability: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.fr.publications.29920>
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Financial education – Challenges and best practices

The study stresses the importance of financial education and illustrates the role of European institutions and international organisms in financial education. Furthermore, it presents the EESC opinion on financial education and responsible consumption of financial products and suggests possible paths for financial education. The focus of this study rests on presenting a representative selection of good practices concerning financial education under the highly diverse programmes and projects conducted by a wide range of actors – social, educational, financial, etc. – from both the private sector and public bodies. The aim is for them to serve as a benchmark. This compendium of best practices reflects geographical diversity and takes into consideration various target groups, avoiding overlap.

This study was published under the title: "*Financial education for all – An EESC publication on financial educational strategies and best practices within the European Union*" (ISBN: 978-92-830-1981-7).

Reference number: EESC/COMM/09/2012
Catalogue number: QE-32-12-544-EN-C
ISBN: 978-92-830-2006-6
Language: EN
Pages: 44
Author: Ana María Cabezas Fernández; Asociación General de Consumidores (ASGECO Confederación); Spain
Requesting service: ECO
Availability: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.publications.27509>
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Feasibility study on the establishment of a European Young Farmers Observatory

This study assess the feasibility of setting up an independent European Young Farmers' Observatory (EYFO) as a new instrument for the provision of information, monitoring of data regarding new entrants in farming activity in Member States, follow-up and evaluation of measures to assist young farmers and provision of support for decision-making and policy options at EU level.

Prior to considering the features and functions of the EYFO, this study provides an overview of the main public and private actors dealing with young farmers' policy at European and national level and their institutional profile, as well as the kind of information they manage and the analysis and services they provide. Special emphasis is given to the work carried out by national and regional authorities, professional farmers' organisations, young farmers' associations and other current or potential networks.

The study identifies best practices and effective operational arrangements for the compilation of information and provision of analysis and recommendations that may contribute to implement policy options. It also highlights the gaps in information and knowledge at EU level which would eventually need to be addressed by the EYFO.

Finally, an assessment is made of the feasibility of the different options to improve information on the situation of Europe's young farmers and close the gaps identified. This includes a cost/benefit analysis of the establishment and sustainability of a new independent observatory, together with recommendations on its status and structure, objectives and means of financing. Other ways of cooperation through existing institutions and the possibility of extending their activities in a sustainable manner are also explored.

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Catalogue number: QE-30-12-159-EN-C
ISBN: Not applicable
Language: EN
Pages: 38
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Future national energy mix scenarios: public engagement processes in the EU and elsewhere

This study presents five ‘better practice’ case study examples to highlight different ways of involving and communicating with the public. After a critical assessment of the "lessons learnt", the authors formulate a set of practical recommendations for the development of a dialogue toolkit and process adaptable for EU Member States.

The study comprises also a review of recent literature and relevant stakeholder initiatives, dialogues and public consultation processes concerning future national energy mix scenarios at local, city, regional, national, and international level. Some best practice processes on other topics are also included.

Findings suggest that involvement-led innovation can be a powerful means for agreeing and/or delivering national, regional, city, and local strategic objectives, at a lower cost to the public purse and with less bureaucracy than traditional processes.

Reference number: EESC/COMM/05/2012
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Language: EN
Pages: 98
Author: Dr Paul Dorfman, Ingrid Prikken, Simon Burall
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The role of civil society in monitoring free trade agreements

The study begins with an introduction to the principle of sustainable development, explaining why this principle implies that civil society should have a role in public decision-making. Furthermore, it examines the central role of the principle of sustainable development in the EU's trade agreements, and looks at the way that this principle is implemented in the EU's trade agreements by the inclusion, in 'sustainable development' chapters, of social and environmental obligations, together with dedicated monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. In addition, it discusses the functions and mandates of the civil society consultative groups established in the EU's trade agreements. It also addresses the extent to which these groups are able to monitor not only the labour and environment obligations in the sustainable development chapters of the agreements, but also human rights obligations. Finally, it evaluates the current situation and provides recommendations for existing and future agreements.

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ISBN: Not applicable
Language: EN
Pages: 16
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Questions on civil society participation to be included in a future Eurobarometer survey

The purpose of this survey is to identify the appropriate questions to be included in a future Eurobarometer survey on behalf of the European Economic and Social Committee. The main aim of the questions is to examine the European citizens' attitude towards civil society, participatory democracy and active citizenship.

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ISBN: Not applicable
Language: EN
Pages: 5
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Social media and social networking as agents of participatory democracy and civic empowerment – The EESC engages organised civil society organisations online

Social media and social networking tools offer the EESC a good opportunity to further enhance its position as a bridge between civil society organisations and the European Union. The successful use of social media will enable the EESC to forge strong and long-lasting relationships with established and emerging civil society organisations online. This study analyses the steps that have already been taken to this effect. It also gives evidence that continued efforts made by the EESC will yield results. Furthermore, the authors make a series of recommendations on the EESC's overall social media engagement, aims and objectives.

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Author: Semantica Research; United Kingdom
Requesting service: COM
Availability: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.fr.publications.27567>
The restricted part is available upon request (webeesc@eesc.europa.eu)
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***The European Economic and Social Committee appointment
procedures in the 27 EU Member States and in Croatia
(2012 update)***

This study is an updated version of a previous research carried out by the same author in 2007. It examines the procedures applied by Member States to appoint EESC members. Furthermore, the research investigates whether the Member States have adopted a legal framework for the choice of delegates. The methodology is primarily based on the 2007 study and secondarily on direct contacts with national governments, national organisations, NGOs and members of the Committee. The results indicate that there is a strong relation between EESC groups and national organisations. As for the smaller countries, it seems that the national economic and social councils are major actors in the selection procedure, whereas "old" Member States mostly carry out the selection like a "routine" situation. Finally, it is worth mentioning that some of the most important criteria for the selection are gender balance, language proficiency and acquaintance with EU affairs.

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