



European Economic and Social Committee

Brussels, 12 December 2003

PLENARY SESSION

10 AND 11 DECEMBER 2003

SUMMARY OF OPINIONS ADOPTED

Full text versions of EESC opinions are available in the 11 official languages on the Committee's website at the following address:

<http://www.esc.eu.int> ("Documents")

The plenary session of 10 and 11 December was attended by **EU Commissioner Barnier**, who addressed the assembly on cohesion policy and the intergovernmental conference, and by representatives of civil society organisations in the future Member States. In addition, following a proposal from the three quaestors, the assembly adopted the new Statute for Members.

1. LISBON STRATEGY AND THE COORDINATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES

• *Resolution on the Lisbon strategy - EESC*

– **Reference:** CESE 1698/2003

– **Key points:**

1. In its resolution responding to a request from the Commission for its views on progress in implementing the Lisbon Strategy, the Committee stresses that the Strategy will not achieve its objectives of international competitiveness, economic, social and environmental progress and sustainable development without a comprehensive review of the method, the institutional and political arrangements and the cooperation instruments tasked with their delivery. It reaches its assessment on the basis of its own observations and on the issues raised at a major conference organised by the Committee in October.
2. In order to address this, the Committee proposes a more dynamic approach, which, at institutional level, would take the form of reinforced coordination to secure renewed economic growth in Europe, based on adequate regard for economic, social and environmental concerns, with a constant interplay between these factors, i.e. on sustainable development and a competitive European system.
3. The resolution also stresses that dialogue with and amongst the social partners at European and national level is crucial to delivering the reforms, particularly those designed to improve education and training, labour market performance, and also social protection systems, whilst ensuring they are sustainable.
4. To succeed, the Lisbon strategy must not only secure the genuine commitment of the European institutions and Member States, but must also:
 - be properly understood and accepted by the public, which means raising its profile and improving its credibility;
 - involve the socio-occupational players in participatory democracy.
5. For its part, the Committee intends to keep a watching brief on progress in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy, in particular by:

- helping to develop public dialogue, directly involving civil society representatives in the evaluation process;
 - holding close consultations on implementation of the strategy with the national economic and social councils and similar organisations;
 - promoting the dissemination of European and national initiatives from the socio-occupational domain and the social partners that have contributed to the successful implementation of the Lisbon strategy;
 - continuing to submit an evaluation report every year for the Spring European Council on progress in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.
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- ***Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPG)***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Delapina** (Employees – AT)
- **Reference:** Own-initiative opinion – CESE 1618/2003
- **Key points:**

Economic growth in Europe has been at a disturbingly low level in the last three years, and the prospects for a quick, strong and sustained recovery are poor in the absence of effective domestic demand. Above all, the low level of investment gives cause for concern. Achieving the Lisbon targets by 2010 therefore seems unrealistic.

Despite their lack of success there has been no change for years in the basic thrust of the broad economic policy guidelines, which consist of a combination of stability-oriented macropolicies and cost-reducing measures on the supply side to increase flexibility. The theory that a policy of stability will suffice by itself to automatically generate growth has proved to be false. The shortage of demand cannot be overcome by increasing flexibility and lowering costs. A stability policy that is skewed to improving supply-side conditions has a restrictive effect. There are still no indications that macroeconomic policies in the EU are endeavouring to give growth a boost on their own.

Unlike the Commission and the Council, the EESC thinks that only by changing the basic thrust of economic policies and in particular macroeconomic policies will it be possible to eliminate within Europe the obstacles which are thwarting a sustained and more far-reaching economic recovery. The EU has to act from within if it is to steer the European economy back on the road to growth and full employment. This will require an active and coordinated economic policy which focuses on expansion and which takes account of macroeconomic

interrelationships. As part of such balanced macroeconomic policies which have full employment as their declared objective, supply-side measures will be required to reduce costs and above all effective demand will have to be given a boost.

Coordination of economic policy in the European Union has not been successful in addressing the current economic crisis. Some rules have proved to be too rigid and tailored too little to meeting practical challenges, and the interplay between the institutions also leaves something to be desired. Extensive reforms are on the agenda. These should above all provide scope for more flexible responses on the economic policy front which focus on the economic challenges of today. This is the only way in which Europe can extricate itself from the present growth and employment crisis. Given the strength that Europe has displayed in the past in combining social stability and innovation, the Committee is optimistic that the requisite reforms can be implemented successfully.

Another positive fact is that the guidelines emphasise the role of the social partners in this coordinating process. In the EESC's view the tripartite social summit held to prepare for Council meetings should also become a fully-fledged consultative forum for growth and employment.

The Committee would stress that better economic policy coordination basically concerns the whole of the European Union and is not only a requirement for the euro area.

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- ***Mid-term review of social policy agenda***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Jahier** (Various Interests – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 312 final – CESE 1614/2003
- **Key points:**

The EESC endorses the overall thrust of and proposals contained in the Commission Communication and reiterates its firm conviction that continuing to implement the measures planned and the future of the social agenda are crucial, even in a period of economic crisis and stagnation.

The EESC agrees that measures, investment and approach must be sustained, paying particular attention to the social impact of legislation, investment in human and social capital and development of the social economy and its various actors, so as to ensure fuller and more

effective achievement of the social development and cohesion objectives provided for by the Lisbon Strategy.

The EESC reiterates that it is imperative for recent data to be more readily available, and believes priorities should be defined more precisely for the second phase of the agenda. In preparation for the public debate to be held in autumn 2004, the EESC therefore expresses its interest in being actively involved in this process that has now been launched.

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2. **SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST**

- ***Green Paper /Services of general interest***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Hernández Bataller** (Various Interests – ES)
- **Co-rapporteur:** **Mr Hencks** (Employees – LU)
- **References:** COM(2003) 270 final – CESE 1607/2003
- **Key points:**

Having been consulted on the Commission's Green Paper, the Committee confirms its views on services of general interest.

The Committee opinion recommends that:

- the Commission should present a draft directive or framework law on economic services of general interest to consolidate the principles governing services of general interest, the main thrust of Community law, the ways of financing public service or universal service obligations, the choice of organisation and regulation methods, performance assessment procedures, and users' rights;
- an ad hoc legal basis should be created in the Treaty;
- a high level of consumer protection should be promoted, as should democratic participation by the users and workers concerned;
- there should be respect for the principle of subsidiarity, whereby it is up to the relevant national, regional and local authorities to define, organise, finance and monitor services of general interest;

- a mechanism should be established allowing subsidiarity to be applied according to functional as well as territorial criteria;
 - the concept of compensation for the cost of public service obligations should be defined;
 - in order to distinguish between economic and non-economic activities, services associated with national education systems and the mandatory membership of a basic social security scheme, and services provided by not-for-profit social, charitable and cultural entities, must be exempt from competition rules.
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3. **TRANSPORT**

• ***Transport infrastructures***

- **Rapporteurs:** Ms Alleweldt (Employees – DE)
Mr Levaux (Employers – FR)
Mr Ribbe (Various Interests – DE)
- **Reference:** Own-initiative opinion – CESE 1611/2003
- **Key points:**

For the EESC, the EU's transport policy must certainly be one of the key areas of action in future as part of the EU's sustainability and climate protection policy.

The EESC also believes it is necessary to develop the pan-European transport corridors in southern and eastern Europe, thereby improving the conditions for managing transport trends in the Mediterranean region.

Infrastructure projects with European implications can only fulfil their function if they respond to economic, political and social interests. This requires the involvement of business associations, transport companies, trade unions, and environmental and consumer organisations.

The EESC also points out that:

- the intermodality of TENs and corridors must be ensured, which requires comprehensible quality criteria;

- there should be more emphasis on the environmentally-friendly use of inland waterways and on short sea shipping and its appropriate integration into the planning of TEN corridors;
- ambitious, but feasible objectives must be defined for developing rail transport, with particular attention to cross-border cooperation projects and connections to seaports.

Finally, as regards funding infrastructure, the EESC proposes the creation of a European fund dedicated to priority TEN-T projects, the management of which would be entrusted to the European Investment Bank and which would be constituted by means of a levy of one cent on every litre of fuel consumed in the EU for all road transport of goods and persons (public or private).

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- **Transfer/Ships register**
- **Rapporteur:** **Ms Bredima Savopoulou** (Employers – EL)
- **References:** COM(2003) 478 final – 2003/0180 COD – CESE 1612/2003
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4. **TAXATION AND FINANCIAL MARKETS**

- ***Taxation in the European Union***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Nyberg** (Employees – SE)
- **Reference:** Own-initiative opinion – CESE 1621/2003
- **Key points:**

Tax policy is an aspect of macroeconomic policy that is always at the centre of the political debate, both at national and EU level. There are considerable differences between Member State tax policies.

The differences between Member State tax policies are not just confined to tax rates, but also to tax base calculation criteria and the way the tax systems are organised. Consequently, the difficulty encountered in achieving a common position on tax issues is not just a question of differing political views.

Unanimity is required for all EU tax decisions. The Convention has proposed a slight easing of this rule, but neither the calculation of the tax base nor of tax rates are covered by this proposal. The EESC has said on several previous occasions that the unanimity requirement for tax matters needs to be reviewed.

Under the tax policy changes proposed by the Convention on the Future of Europe, EU action can be legitimate not just for the needs of the single market but also to address distortions of competition. The Convention proposes a switch to qualified majority voting for administrative cooperation, tax fraud and tax evasion, and that this shall also apply to corporation tax in addition to indirect taxes.

As we see it, there is only one way to unravel all these knots. The European Union must have competence and be genuinely able to decide by qualified majority voting in tax matters whenever a country's ability to set its own taxes is largely dependent on the behaviour of the other Member States in a single market of 25.

Qualified majority voting must be restricted to certain types of tax, such as corporation tax, taxation of income from capital and of environmentally dangerous activities. It should also apply to taxes that impact on the operation of the single market or distort competition. It must not apply to any national differences that have no impact on the market or on competition. In addition to applying to certain types of tax only, qualified majority voting must only be used to set minimum levels.

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- ***Securities – Transparency requirements***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Simon** (Employers – FR)
- **References:** COM(2003) 138 final – 2003/0045 COD – CESE 1619/2003
- **Key points:**

Improving the financial and accounting transparency of publicly traded companies is a key element for confidence in financial market operations. Moreover, greater harmonisation of obligations incumbent on companies in this regard is vital for the integration of European financial markets, which is a goal of the Financial Services Action Plan.

However, the proposed directive does raise a number of issues, some on matters of principle, others of a technical nature, the most contentious of which is the publication of quarterly information.

This issue is, however, the subject of genuine debate. Companies are strongly opposed to the mandatory publication of quarterly information. Investors would prefer to see improvements in the quality rather than an increase in the quantity of the tremendous flow of information they already have to deal with.

The mandatory publication of quarterly information would also have a genuine cost impact on issuers, not least SMEs. Above all, the widespread practice of quarterly profit and loss reporting is liable to encourage investors to adopt a more short-term approach. This might increase market volatility and would also hamper the application of any long-term strategy by companies required to justify their results every three months.

In the light of all these objections, it would be prudent to adopt a gradual approach, with an obligation only to publish information on trends in turnover and activities for the first and third quarters.

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- ***VAT – Postal services***

- **Rapporteur:** **Ms King** (Employers – UK)
- **References:** COM(2003) 234 final – 2003/0091 CNS – CESE 1620/2003
- **Key points:**

The Committee supports the elimination of distortions of competition in postal services, but would prefer that the removal of the VAT exemption should coincide with the complete liberalisation of the sector.

The EESC endorses the application of the reduced rate for letters and small packages and accepts the standard rate for non-traditional postal services (except for unaddressed mail).

Nonetheless, the Committee is convinced that there must be no price increase and no limitation on the universal service for users of postal services. In addition, the EESC fears that not all the Member States will apply a reduced rate for traditional postal services

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5. **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

- ***The role of civil society in the new European strategy for the Western Balkans***

- **Rapporteur: Mr Confalonieri** (Various Interests – IT)

- **Reference:** Exploratory opinion – 1624/2003

- **Key points:**

The EESC is expressing its opinion on the role of civil society in the new European strategy for the Western Balkans at the request of the Italian presidency.

The opinion mainly considers how civil society can contribute to implementing the Thessaloniki agenda for the Western Balkans.

The EESC feels that the role of organised civil society is to secure key social development objectives in the process of the five countries' integration with the EU.

The EESC's opinion particularly aims to take a critical look at the opportunities and strengths that can be exploited with a view to bolstering the role of organised civil society in the Western Balkans.

The opinion focuses on the political and institutional, economic and cultural importance of civil society and describes certain current features of organised civil society in the countries of the Western Balkans. The EESC then presents an interpretation of the Thessaloniki agenda from the perspective of civil society's role. And finally, some ways of strengthening organised civil society are considered, from a regional, national and European angle.

The EESC analyses and suggests how organised civil society can contribute to democracy and institutional development, economic growth and human development, cultural pluralism and international cooperation.

The EESC opinion identifies fields of action for European and Balkan civil society organisations as part of the process of strengthening institutions, combating organised crime and corruption and developing the economy, and particularly recommends access to Community programmes.

To strengthen organised civil society, it is necessary to develop international partnership, by guaranteeing continuity to initiatives, and overcome ideological suspicion and differences between the working methods of organised civil society and national and local authorities.

The EESC encourages the systematic forming of links with organised civil society in order to strengthen the consultation and support capacity of socio-economic partners and highlight the importance of other civil society groupings.

The exploratory opinion has sought to highlight the importance of mutual understanding and awareness of cultural differences and of the specific ways in which local society is organised. The EESC suggests focusing on the following areas: education and vocational training, exchanges of experience and good practice, and public and sectoral information and communication.

The EESC also recommends the use of joint consultative committees (JCCs) established with candidate countries. The JCC system (arrangements, scheduling) should be adjusted to meet the differing requirements of the Western Balkan countries.

Finally, the EESC recommends the holding of an international summit on the role of civil society in the new European strategy for the Western Balkans, highlighting both the key role of civil society organisations and the priorities for action.

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- ***Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our eastern and southern neighbours***
- **Rapporteur:** Ms Alleweldt (Employees – DE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 104 final – CESE 1622/2003
- **Key points:**

The EESC sees itself playing an active role in the future configuration of relations between the EU and those countries which will border directly on the EU after the forthcoming enlargement.

In its opinion, the EESC urges that the partnership and cooperation agreements be exploited more effectively.

After having addressed the outcome of the fact-finding visits to the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus, the EESC sets out a basic assessment of the EU's neighbourhood policy and considers the expected economic consequences for the three countries concerned.

The EESC then addresses the issue of frontiers, the key problems in this context being ever-increasing, mass emigration and human trafficking.

The EESC describes the work of civil society organisations and their expectations of relations with the EU. It then goes on to address EU support policy, internal reforms and the options as regards relations with the EU.

The EESC recommends the establishment of a proactive strategy to assist Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It then defines the tasks to be addressed as a matter of priority, including measures to assist civil society.

As regards further work in this field by the EESC, the opinion recommends the establishment of "structural dialogues", along the lines of the work carried out with partner organisations in the acceding states; these dialogues should take place in "liaison committees".

The EESC proposes that a symposium be held with a view to providing new suggestions for the future configuration of relations with the EU.

In this context, the EESC should also step up its contacts with organisations in Russia.

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- ***Scheme of generalised tariff preferences – GSP 2002-2005***
- **Rapporteur-general: Mr Pezzini** (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM (2003) 634 final – 2003/0259 ACC – CESE 1623/2003
- **Key points:**

Over the last few decades, the EU has consistently adjusted and updated its policy on trade preferences for developing countries in the light of changing circumstances. The latest major revision of the General System of Preferences (GSP) came into force on 1 January 1995 to cover the ten-year period starting on that date. It is, therefore, due to expire on 31 December 2004 and this necessitates a further revision.

The Commission originally envisaged publishing a document in September 2003 to set out its proposals for the new regime to come into effect on 1 January 2005. Subsequently, it decided to delay the introduction of the new system for a period of one year and to put forward a proposal for an interim arrangement in the intervening period, which would continue the existing guidelines with some relatively minor modifications, primarily of a technical nature. The ten-year period for the new regime is now expected to commence on 1 January 2006.

The Council has asked for the Committee's opinion on the regulation in question. The opinion will have to be adopted on 11 December 2003. In view of the urgency of the consultation, **Mr Pezzini** has been appointed rapporteur-general and will submit the opinion at the plenary session on 10 December.

The EESC accepts the Commission's decision to postpone the introduction of a new definitive GSP system and to extend the existing regime until 31 December 2005 at least.

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6. **HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- ***Integrated product policy (IPP)***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Adams** (Various Interests –UK)
- **References:** COM(2003) 302 final – CESE 1598/2003
- **Key points:**

The EESC believes that the Commission Communication is a starting point underlining the need for an environmentally proactive and balanced policy towards creating a more sustainable production and consumption.

The Committee feels that IPP can make an important contribution to sustainable development and in implementing the EU's priorities regarding environmental protection, but could be enhanced by a clearer and more detailed policy approach, especially given the fact civil society is beginning to recognise the need for a paradigm shift towards genuinely sustainable production and consumption.

Partnerships between key stakeholders are essential - consumers are seeking a lead from industry and government, and industry needs the assurance of consumer support and targeted market incentives, while government looks to civil society for its mandate on new sustainability initiatives. The EESC therefore urges the Commission to increase its efforts on achieving a

sustainability strategy. In particular, the Commission should apply the following points for any subsequent policy strategy or action aimed at developing IPP:

- Specify the role of IPP in fulfilling the specific commitments made in the Sixth Environmental Action Programme and other related policy programmes,
- outline a clear indication of the direction and scale of the future innovations necessary,
- establish a commitment to developing the most appropriate and effective policy option from the diverse mix of policy instruments mentioned in the EU's Sixth Environmental Action Programme, including laying down clear environmental objectives and ambitions; laying down a timeframe, the scope (which product or function areas), indicators, evaluation and reporting; and, establishing an IPP steering committee and subsequent working groups on specific IPP tools.

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• ***European environment and health strategy***

– **Rapporteur:** **Mr Ehnmark** (Employees – SE)

– **References:** COM(2003) 338 final – CESE 1602/2003

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• ***Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC)***

– **Rapporteur:** **Mr Braghin** (Employers – IT)

– **References:** COM(2003) 354 final – CESE 1596/2003

– **Key points:**

The directive is designed to be an avant-garde tool in the strategy for sustainable development as part of the local agenda 21 programmes, as well as forming a legislative framework for a series of voluntary instruments that have been set up in the meantime, from EMAS registration to agreements on emissions trading. These innovative aspects explain, at least in part, the difficulties of transposition and application that have emerged, and the limited number of plants that the Commission has been able to evaluate.

The EESC (which has taken into account the complementary Opinion prepared by its Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCIC) focusing on targeting actions, restoring

competition, assuming the balance of regulation and the borders on industry and allowing citizens to make informed choices, therefore hopes that the Commission will carry out a more detailed analysis of the difficulties in implementation which have been encountered and clarify the most important issues to date such as: the criteria for identifying the companies covered by the regulations, how to formulate the environmental permit, the technical and human resources needed by the administration in charge of implementation, the possibilities for voluntary agreements and interaction with other directives or regulations. This would be especially useful for new Member States and SMEs.

The EESC believes that a linked and proactive approach should be adopted to promote implementation of the directive, including informing and training stakeholders (in particular the local and other authorities in charge of permits as well as operators), exchanging best practice and involving local employers' associations and trade unions, so as to have a consensus when planning the investments required.

A pre-condition for the realisation of this proactive policy is the reinforcement of the teams of experts and the organisational structure of the Seville JRC, which appears to be inadequate even for drawing up the BREF, which is its main task. The EESC hopes that its tasks will be extended to include disseminating information and active participation in training, seminars, conferences etc, in addition to evaluating the application and use of the BREF.

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- ***Waste management – extractive industries***

- **Rapporteur:** Ms Le Nouail (Employees – FR)
- **References:** COM(2003) 319 final – 2003/0107 COD – CESE 1597/2003
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- ***Waste prevention and recycling strategy***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Buffetaut (Employers – FR)
- **References:** COM(2003) 301 final – CESE 1601/2003
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- ***Project mechanisms – Kyoto (II)***

- **Rapporteur:** Ms Le Nouail (Employees – FR)
- **References:** COM(2003) 516 final – 2003/ 0202 CNS – CESE 1605/2003
- **Contact:** *Mr Johannes Kind*
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- ***LIFE/Prolongation***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Ribbe (Various Interests – DE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 667 final – 2003/ 0260 COD – CESE 1603/2003
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7. **AGRICULTURE**

- ***Tobacco/2004 harvest premium***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Moraleda Quilez (Various Interests – ES)
- **References:** COM(2003) 633 final – 2003/ 0251 CNS – CESE 1606/2003
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- ***Hops/Aid extension***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Kienle (Employers – DE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 562 final – 2003/ 0216 CNS – CESE 1600/2003
- **Contact:** *Ms Eleonora Di Nicolantonio*
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- ***Aid/Seeds –2004/2005 marketing year***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Bros** (Various Interests – FR)
- **References:** COM(2003) 552 final – 2003/ 0212 CNS – CESE 1604/2003
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8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

• ***Equality men/women – Promotion of European Organisations***

- **Rapporteur:** **Ms Wahrolin** (Various Interests – SE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 279 final – 2003/0109 (COD) – CESE 1616/2003
- **Key points:**

The Committee endorses the Commission's view that there is a need for a basic instrument for awarding operating and action grants.

The Committee believes that further clarification is needed of the guidelines for awarding grants in respect of underrepresented groups of women and girls, e.g. those with disabilities; and for women and girls that are discriminated against for multiple reasons.

The Committee feels that the wording relating to which other organisations active in the field of equal opportunities between men and women are entitled to apply for grants needs clarifying.

The EESC feels it is important that the special action programme should be adopted as a complement to other **targeted** programme initiatives. It is also essential to push ahead with gender equality mainstreaming in all Community programmes and initiatives, where civil society organisations active in the field of equal opportunities between men and women can also be given the opportunity to contribute and secure project grants.

Grants to the European Women's Lobby and to other organisations active in the field of equal opportunities between men and women have not kept pace with their increasing workload in connection with enlargement and mainstreaming. Consequently, the EESC believes there is a real need to increase financial support.

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9. **IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION**

- ***Immigration, integration and employment***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Pariza Castaños (Employees – ES)

- **References:** COM(2003) 336 final – CESE 1613/2003

- **Key points:**

The EESC considers the Commission Communication to be necessary in view of the present lack of coordination between the Member States on immigration. Its global approach, taking account of all elements involved in immigration and integration, is the right one. The document is very positive since, as the Committee has suggested in a number of opinions and at the September 2002 conference, it defines integration as a key aspect of European immigration policy. Integration is necessary for both economic efficiency and social cohesion.

The EESC proposes that the Commission might manage a European integration programme, equipped with sufficient economic resources and within the framework of coordination of national policies, and stresses how important it is that the Council grant the Commission the political, legislative and budgetary means needed to promote the integration of immigrants. The EESC highlights the importance of establishing positive and effective immigrant arrival programmes in cooperation with civil society organisations.

The EESC believes that the Commission's proposal for civic citizenship is based on the same objective as the Committee's proposal for **Union citizenship**, according to which third-country nationals resident in the European Union on a stable or long-term basis would share the same rights and obligations as nationals of the Member States, i.e. the citizens of Europe.

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- ***European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Sharma (Various Interests – UK)

- **References:** COM(2003) 483 final – 2003/0185 (CNS) – CESE 1615/2003

– **Key points:**

The EESC is convinced that the Monitoring Centre should have a more proactive role in making policy recommendations to EU Institutions and to Member States, and that this should be reflected in the objective.

The EESC favours an inclusive Monitoring Centre, uniting all stakeholders and holds the opinion that this should be reflected in the composition of the Board. Hence the Committee favours inclusion of one representative of each Member State, of relevant international partner organisations, of European institutions including the EESC and representatives of civil society organisations and social partners in the general board of the Monitoring Centre.

It is therefore important to ensure that the Centre's Management Board includes persons who are independent of Member States.

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10. **SOCIAL PROTECTION**

- ***Social security schemes for employed persons, self-employed persons and members of their families***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Boldt** (Employees – FI)

- **References:** COM(2003) 468 final – 2003/0184 (COD) – CESE 1617/2003

– **Key points:**

The Committee welcomes the Commission proposal. The Committee fully endorses the plan to overhaul Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72, to make legislation clearer and easier to interpret and understand for EU citizens who make use of the right to move within the Community. It is therefore important that current legal practice should be enshrined in the legislation. The amendments are warranted by the need for clarity and transparency, and will help to improve both legal and social protection for citizens.

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11. **INFORMATION SOCIETY**

- ***eGovernment services***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Pezzini (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 406 final – 2003/0147 COD – CESE 1610/2003
- **Contact:** Mr Raffaele Del Fiore
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12. **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

- ***R&D aid***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Wolf (Various Interests – DE)
- **References:** OJ C 190 of 12/8/2003 – CESE 1588/2003
- **Contact:** Mr Nemesis Martinez
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- ***Technology transfer agreements***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Metzler (Various Interests – DE)
- **References:** OJ C 235/11 of 1/10/2003 – CESE 1594/2003
- **Contact:** Mr Nemesis Martinez
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13. **COMPETITION POLICY**

- ***Competition rules – Articles 81 and 82***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Metzler (Various Interests – DE)
- **References:** OJ C 243/3 of 10/10/2003 – CESE 1595/2003

- **Contact:** *Mr Nemesio Martinez*
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14. **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

- ***Company law/Corporate governance***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Ravoet (Employers - BE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 284 final – CESE 1592/2003
- **Contact** *Mr João Pereira Dos Santos*
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- ***Community audits***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Byrne (Employers – IE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 286 final – CESE 1593/2003
- **Contact** *Mr João Pereira Dos Santos*
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15. **ROAD SAFETY**

- ***Road safety 2003/2010***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Simons (Employers – NL)
- **References:** COM(2003) 311 final – CESE 1608/2003
- **Contact:** *Mr Luis Lobo*
(Tel. : 00 32 2 546 97 17 – e-mail : luis.lobo@esc.eu.int)

- ***Amendment/Speed limiting devices***

- **Rapporteur:** Mr Ranocchiari (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 350 final – 2003/0122 COD – CESE 1609/2003

- **Contact:** *Mr Raffaele Del Fiore*
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- ***Motor vehicles – restraint systems***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Ranocchiari** (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 363 final – 2003/0130 COD – CESE 1591/2003

- **Contact:** *Ms Aleksandra Klenke*
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- ***Motor vehicles – anchorages for safety belts***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Ranocchiari** (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 362 final – 2003/0136 COD – CESE 1590/2003

- **Contact** *Ms Aleksandra Klenke*
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- ***Motor vehicles – seat anchorages***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Ranocchiari** (Employers – IT)
- **References:** COM(2003) 361 final – 2003/0128 COD – CESE 1589/2003

- **Contact:** *Ms Aleksandra Klenke*
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16. **CODIFICATION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF COMMUNITY LEGISLATION**

- ***Extraction solvents/Foodstuffs (Codified version)***

- **Rapporteur:** **Mr Donnelly** (Various Interests – IE)
- **References:** COM(2003) 467 final – 2003/ 0181 COD – CESE 1599/2003
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