

EESC



INFO

New address of the EESC:
Rue Belliard 99, B-1040 Brussels

December 2004 / 9

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE — A BRIDGE BETWEEN EUROPE AND ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY WWW.ESC.EU.INT

EDITORIAL



Dear reader,

The year 2004 was an extraordinary one for our Committee. We welcomed 95 new members and moved — virtually at the same time — to our new premises in the heart of the European quarter. The main bulk of the work having been done, we can be proud to state that this formidable

challenge to both staff and members was mastered remarkably smoothly. Let me express my thanks to all parties involved in this joint effort. Thus, a solid basis has been created not only for overcoming the few remaining difficulties, but also — and even more importantly — for continuing our Committee's work under improved conditions.

New challenges lie ahead.

- We will have a critical look at our internal organisation of work.
- Relations with the other institutions and strategic partners will have to be renewed or strengthened.
- The draft Constitution has confirmed and strengthened the role of the Committee in the European framework. We now have a profile that will enable us to play a key role in promoting and structuring European civil dialogue — we have to use it to its full potential.
- The interinstitutional efforts in bridging the gap between the European citizen and the 'official Europe' call for our contribution.
- Over-arching topics shaping the future of Europe will have to be addressed, such as the Lisbon strategy, sustainability and the identification or definition of other shared values of European society.
- Our activities in external relations are to be continued and expanded.

At our December plenary meeting, these and other topics will be discussed on the basis of a concrete work programme. I am certain that all these challenges can be tackled in the spirit of cooperation that is the trademark of our Committee.

With Christmas approaching, let me already seize this first opportunity to express my thanks for this cooperation.

Anne-Marie Sigmund
President of the European Economic
and Social Committee

Activities of the EESC during the Luxembourg Presidency

As the Netherlands Presidency draws to a close, the EESC is already actively preparing for the forthcoming Luxembourg Presidency of the European Union.

Mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy

One of the recurring issues for every Presidency is the future of Europe, and the Lisbon strategy in particular.

This has a particular ring of truth for the future Luxembourg Presidency. It will be in charge of organising the spring summit on 25 March 2005, during which a mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy will be carried out.

The EESC is particularly active in this field, having organised public hearings and drawn the attention of prime movers in the main European institutions to the delays that have affected the implementation of the strategy.

The EESC's most recent contribution was a high-quality opinion for which the rapporteur was Mr Bruno Vever (FR), with co-rapporteurs Mr Ernst Ehnmark (SE) and Mr John Simpson (UK). The opinion, entitled 'Improving the implementation of the Lisbon strategy', was requested from the EESC by the European Council on 25 and 26 March. The opinion was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 169 votes at the EESC's October plenary session, and was transmitted to the Council of the European Union. It is a very important contribution to the forthcoming spring summit during the Luxembourg Presidency.

EESC referrals by the Luxembourg Presidency

The future Luxembourg Presidency has announced its intention to ask the EESC to draw up an exploratory opinion on a subject directly linked to the Lisbon strategy — sustainable development in the context of the financial perspectives for 2007–13.

European Constitution

The contribution of civil society is essential if the Constitutional Treaty is to be successfully ratified

No one would dispute that there is no longer any point in further discussion of ways and means of modifying the Constitutional Treaty. What matters now is to focus on the ratification campaign under way in the 25 Member States and, particularly in the countries which have chosen to hold referendums, to implement an effective communications strategy enabling European citizens to be fully informed of the ins and outs of this Treaty, which was formally signed by the representatives of the 25 Member States in

(Continued on page 2)



Improving the implementation of the Lisbon strategy. Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, President of the EESC with his Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri and Mr. Raymond Hencks, President of the Luxembourg ESC, in the Grand Ducal Palace in Luxembourg.

The EESC has been particularly active in this field, issuing opinions and organising public hearings to which representatives of civil society organisations and networks were invited.

The EESC and the network of national economic and social councils

Given the large scale of this network, the EESC is currently working to step up contact with all network members, particularly with Luxembourg's Economic and Social Council in view of the forthcoming Presidency. At the invitation of the Luxembourg ESC, the presidents and secretaries-general of the national ESCs and the EESC held their annual meeting on 25 and 26 November 2004. The meeting focused on the ways and means of achieving the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. This summit was also the subject of a final declaration and a joint press release, from the Economic and Social Councils of the EU Member States and the EESC, which can be consulted on the website of the ESCs and the EESC (www.esc.eu.int).

At the summit, it was also decided that a joint high-level conference would be held in Luxembourg on 26 and 27 January 2005, entitled 'For a competitive, social and sustainable Europe — Making the Lisbon strategy a success through a pact with organised civil society', organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Luxembourg Economic and Social Council, as part of Luxembourg's Presidency of the EU.



Mr Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, MEP, rapporteur on the Constitutional Treaty, Mr Richard Corbett, MEP, rapporteur on the Constitutional Treaty, Mr Johannes Voggenhuber, 1st Vice-President of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee, Mr Roger Briesch, Vice-President of the EESC.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **26 and 27 January 2005:** Joint conference of the Luxembourg Economic and Social Council and the European Economic and Social Committee in conjunction with Luxembourg's Presidency of the European Union 'For a competitive, social and sustainable Europe — Making the Lisbon strategy a success through a pact with organised civil society'.

(continued from page 1)

Rome on 29 October. The active involvement of organised civil society is, in this context, one of the keys to the success of the process.

This message, delivered at the Committee's plenary session on 28 October by Henri Malosse, rapporteur on the Constitutional Treaty, was stressed again at a joint hearing on the European Constitution chaired by Roger Briesch, Vice-President of the EESC, and organised in cooperation with the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs. At this meeting, nearly 80 representatives of European civil society networks and organisations clearly expressed their support for the Constitutional Treaty and their desire to be actively involved in the ratification process.

The heart of the debate: how does the Treaty benefit the public? The role of civil society in public awareness

Two key issues were at the heart of the debates: (i) How does the Constitutional Treaty benefit the European public? (ii) What role can civil society organisations play in raising public awareness?

The European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee was represented by its First Vice-Chairman, Johannes Voggenhuber, and by the European Parliament's rapporteurs on the Constitutional Treaty, Richard Corbett and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo. The EESC's rapporteur, Henri Malosse, also attended this meeting, which formed part of the preparations for the hearing of representatives of the main sectors of European organised civil society which the Constitutional Affairs Committee will be holding on 25 November.

Prior to this hearing, which the EESC has also helped to prepare, Henri Malosse will present the Committee's opinion, drawn up at the request of the European Parliament, to the Constitutional Affairs Committee members.

Following the debates on 9 November, Richard Corbett expressed his intention to alter his draft report, which was due to be adopted by the European Parliament in early December, so as to take account of the contributions made by the speakers, and in particular to put more emphasis on the progress made by the Constitutional Treaty in the areas of citizens' rights and participatory democracy.

Roger Briesch and Johannes Voggenhuber, for their part, welcomed the cooperation between the Committee and the European Parliament launched at this event, which reflects their desire that organised civil society be actively involved in the information and awareness campaigns that will be taking place in Member States during the process of ratifying the Constitutional Treaty.

EESC Bureau extraordinary meeting at The Hague, Netherlands

The newly-elected EESC Bureau met on 23 November at The Hague (Netherlands). A joint formal sitting had also been organised with the Executive Bureau of the Dutch Economic and Social Council (SER).

At its meeting, the EESC Bureau discussed the president's work programme 2004-06, which the new President, Anne-Marie Sigmund, would present at the plenary session on 15 and 16 December.

During the joint formal sitting between the SER Bureau and the EESC Bureau, the SER President, Mr Herman H. F. Wijffels, spoke on 'Labour relations in the Netherlands — the current situation: the role of the SER and the Labour Foundation'.

The two bureaux also discussed topical issues, including **the European Constitutional Treaty and the Lisbon strategy**.



Ms Sigmund, President of the EESC, with Mr Wijffels, President of the SER.



Professor Hall with EESC members Mr van Iersel (NL, Group I) and Mr Pariza Castaños (E, Group II).

A European agenda for the metropolitan areas

The EESC opinion on 'European metropolitan regions: socioeconomic implications for Europe's future' (own-initiative opinion) was adopted almost unanimously on 1 July 2004. The rapporteur was Mr van Iersel.

As part of the preparations for drawing up the opinion, the Committee held a hearing on 19 February 2004 with representatives of several European organisations such as Metrex and Eurocities. Also attending was Professor Sir Peter Hall, Director of the Institute of Community Studies and one of the world's leading experts on issues relating to urban agglomerations.

The study group also visited Barcelona, a particularly interesting metropolitan area and a prime example of good governance in a metropolitan area.

As a follow-up to the opinion, the EESC recently held a conference in Amsterdam on 9 and 10 December entitled 'A European agenda for metropolitan areas' with Regio Randstad, the metropolitan area covering the main urban agglomerations in the Netherlands.

One of the key conclusions drawn at the conference was that the European institutions should pay more attention to urban phenomena and, in particular, the development of urban regions, as it is in these areas that the European Union will have to face its main challenges in the 21st century.

The conference was attended by about 20 EESC members, including the EESC President, Ms Sigmund, who spoke at the closing session, the president of the study group, Mr Pariza, and the rapporteur, Mr van Iersel.

Agriculture and food safety, immigration key topics discussed at the Valencia EURO-MED summit on 18 and 19 November



From left to right: Hanna Siniora of the Palestinian Economic and Social Council; Zdenek Skromach, Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Minister of Labour and President of the Council of Economic and Social Agreement; Roger Briesch, Vice-President of the EESC; Jaime Montalvo Correa, President of the Spanish Economic and Social Council; Amjad El Majali, the Jordanian Minister of Labour and Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Social Dialogue; Ephraim Zilony of the Israeli Economic and Social Council.

Agriculture and food safety and the question of immigration were the key topics under discussion at the Museo Príncipe Felipe in Valencia, the venue for this year's EURO-MED summit organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Economic and Social Council of the Kingdom of Spain.

For the first time, the summit brought together representatives of the new configuration of an enlarged 25-member European Union and nine of the 10 Mediterranean partner countries including the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Agriculture and food safety in the context of the EURO-MED partnership was one of the major topics discussed. The summit recommended that agriculture be given higher political priority in the Barcelona process, so that the MEDA programme could create the right climate for agricultural development and food safety.

Following discussion of the other major report on 'Immigration and cooperation between the countries of the region', the summit called for more

integrated migration policies providing a balanced view of all aspects of migration including migratory flow management, combating the causes of clandestine and irregular migration, and the social and professional integration of migrants and their families.

The EESC delegation, led by Vice-Presidents Roger Briesch and Dimitrios Dimitriadis, also held a series of bilateral meetings with several delegations, including the Israeli Economic and Social Committee, the Jordanian Minister of Labour and the Palestinian Economic and Social Council. The Israelis and Palestinians noted their willingness to bring civil society organisations together to work for peace in the Middle East.

The Jordanian Minister of Labour, Mr Amjad Majali, expressed his country's interest in hosting the 2005 summit of economic and social councils and similar institutions in Amman. Mr Majali, who also chairs the Tripartite Commission on Social Dialogue, an ILO-sponsored project in Jordan, is also working on the establishment of a Jordanian economic and social committee.

Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund (Group III — Various interests — Austria)

The new President of the European Economic and Social Committee



*Inaugural speech by Anne-Marie Sigmund
on her election as
President of the European Economic and Social Committee*

Brussels, 27 October 2004

1. THANKS

First of all I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the confidence you have shown in me by electing me to this post.

Continuity

I would therefore like the keynote of this forthcoming term of office to be continuity. The strategic approaches of my predecessors, from Beatrice Rangoni-Machiavelli and Göke Frerichs to Roger Briesch, have withstood the test of time.

2. INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

2.1. Internal organisation of work

Integrating our 95 new colleagues has been just as successful as was the move to the new building in the heart of the European quarter.

We have highly-qualified, motivated staff.

In spite of this, I am convinced that our institution is not yet operating at its optimum efficiency.

If we improve transparency and communication, we will also improve decision-making and, not least, motivation.

In our consultative work, we must adhere yet more firmly to the principle of selectivity, in order to demonstrate our particular added value even more clearly than we have done up until now.

2.2. Relations with other institutions and strategic partners

Our cooperation with the other institutions is going through a period of significant change.

- The Europe of 15 has been enlarged to a Europe of 25.
- We will be working together with a newly-elected Parliament and a newly-appointed Commission.
- The Constitutional Treaty, which will be signed the day after tomorrow in Rome, has laid the foundations for a quantum leap in the legal basis for European action.

The EESC's role has already been strengthened by the Treaty of Nice, and the Constitutional Treaty extends it still further.

It is now up to us to use these opportunities and to confirm and strengthen our position as a useful and reliable partner.

I will therefore make a point of using the early days of my presidency for dialogue with senior representatives from the Commission, the Council

and the European Parliament, and for a meeting with the President of the CoR. I will also make every effort to make personal contact, or renew and strengthen existing contacts, with the heads of the most important EU agencies and with key players in organised civil society.

3. CHALLENGES FOR EUROPE

Some of the priorities for our work as a Committee will be set for us from outside, as the new challenges facing the European Union will also be a factor in determining the Committee's agenda.

3.1. Constitution — Civil dialogue

The draft Constitution and its provisions on participatory democracy and civil dialogue have given the Committee every opportunity to put its self-image as a bridge to civil society to the test. We now have a profile that will enable us to play a key role in promoting and structuring European civil dialogue. This key role — and I am particularly keen to emphasise this — should not mean that we claim a monopoly on civil dialogue in all its forms; it still leaves plenty of scope for other essential facets of this interactive public debate.

3.2. Communicating Europe

If organised civil society is to play a part in European matters, it must want to do so. However, almost the opposite seems to be true at the moment. The question is 'Has President Delors' citizens' Europe left the citizens behind?' The level of participation in elections to the European Parliament would suggest that it has.

The Dutch Presidency and the Commission have therefore, quite rightly, made the 'Communicating Europe' initiative, launched under the Irish Presidency, a priority.

We will doubtless have an important part to play in this communication strategy. In doing so we have an advantage over the other institutions in the form of direct access to civil society in the 25 Member States. With over 300 national organisations and wider networks, our members hold the key to this.

3.3. Foreign policy

New candidate countries are awaiting entry. The enlargement of the EU also means that we have new neighbours, who are expecting us to adopt clear positions.

The Commission was therefore justified in sending a clear signal by specifically mentioning neighbourhood policy in the portfolio of the Austrian commissioner, Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner. In my initial preparatory contact with her, I told her about the Committee's desire to cooperate actively and received her agreement in principle to involve us in appropriate additional tasks.

The issue of the content and structure of European foreign and trade policy is also of concern to the Committee. The key words here are 'global governance'. Continuing our bilateral and multilateral cooperation policy will form the basis for putting this into practice.

4. THE FUTURE OF EUROPE: PROPOSED KEY SUBJECTS

I firmly believe that the draft Constitution is not the end, but rather the beginning of that debate.

4.1. Lisbon strategy

First and foremost I would like to mention the Lisbon strategy. Therefore, this international shop window of European economic and social policy has an opportunity to build identity like almost no other European initiative.

We will today be adopting an opinion that contains proposals for improving the Lisbon strategy and sets the direction for our future activities in this area.

4.2. Sustainability

The principle of sustainability, which is specified as a goal in the Constitutional Treaty, will increasingly influence the debate on the future. The European Union has made its commitment to sustainability and to

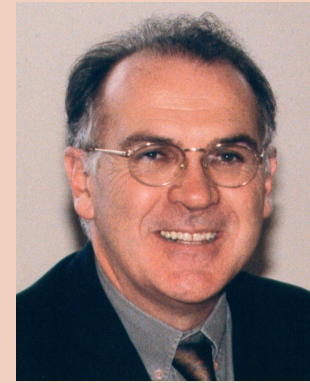
New organisation of the EESC



PRESIDENCY

The EESC Presidency comprises one president and two vice-presidents with a two-year term of office.

President
Anne-Marie Sigmund
Group III — Various interests — Austria



Secretary-General of the Committee
Patrick Venturini



Vice-President
Roger Briesch
Group II — Employees — France



Vice-President
Dimitrios Dimitriadis
Group I — Employers — Greece

The EESC is divided into three groups: 'Employers', 'Employees' and 'Various interests'.

Group I — Employers



President
Giacomo Regaldo
Italy

Vice-Presidents — Group I

Manuel Cavaleiro Brandão — Portugal
Antal Csuport — Hungary
Filip Hamro-Drotz — Finland
Renate Hornung-Draus — Germany
José Isaías Rodríguez García-Caro — Spain

Group II — Employees



President
Mario Sepi
Italy

Vice-Presidents — Group II

Peteris Krigers — Latvia
Josly Piette — Belgium
Heinz Putzhammer — Germany
María Candelas Sánchez Miguel — Spain

Group III — Various interests



President
Staffan Nilsson
Sweden

Vice-Presidents — Group III

Miklos Barabás — Hungary
Lucia Fusco — Italy
Jillian van Turnhout — Ireland

BUREAU

The Bureau organises the Committee's operations and proceedings. It has 37 members including the president and the two vice-presidents.

Anne-Marie Sigmund — Austria

Group I

Dimitrios Dimitriadis — Greece
José María Espuny Moyano — Spain
Göke Frerichs — Germany
Filip Hamro-Drotz — Finland
Johannes Kleemann — Austria
Henri Malosse — France

Peter Mihók — Slovakia
Gintaras Morkis — Lithuania
Jaroslaw Mulewicz — Poland
Giacomo Regaldo — Italy
Joost van Iersel — The Netherlands
Clive Wilkinson — United Kingdom

Group II

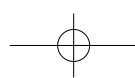
Roger Briesch — France
Liina Carr — Estonia
Georgios Dassis — Greece
Alexander-Michael Graf von Schwerin — Germany
Derek Hunter — United Kingdom

Søren Kargaard — Denmark
Demetris Kittenis — Cyprus
Josly Piette — Belgium
Metka Rokсандić — Slovenia
Mario Sepi — Italy
Dana Stechová — Czech Republic
José María Zufiaur — Spain

Group III

Grace Attard — Malta
Adrien Bedossa — France
Henriks Danusevics — Latvia

Ann Davison — United Kingdom
John Donnelly — Ireland
Joseph Ewert — Luxembourg
Bernardo Hernández Bataller — Spain
Jean-François Hoffelt — Belgium
Staffan Nilsson — Sweden
Martin Nose — Slovenia
Jorge Pegado Liz — Portugal
Janos Tóth — Hungary



for the next two years

QUAESTORS

Pursuant to the new EESC rules of procedure, three quaestors have been elected.



Antonello Pezzini
Group I — Employers — Italy



Daniel Retureau
Group II — Employees — France



Carlos Ribeiro
Group III — Various interests — Portugal

For its work on the main fields covered by the Treaties, the Committee has six sections and a Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCIC), namely:

Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)



President
Alexander-Michael Graf von Schwerin

Group II — Employees — Germany

Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)



President
Bernardo Hernández Bataller

Group III — Various interests — Spain

Section for External Relations (REX)



President
Ann Davison

Group III — Various interests — United Kingdom

Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)



President
Henri Malosse

Group I — Employers — France

Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)



President
Georgios Dassis

Group II — Employees — Greece

Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT)



President
José María Espuny Moyano

Group I — Employers — Spain

The Consultative Commission on Industrial Change was set up by an EESC plenary assembly decision of 24 October 2002, following the expiry of the Coal and Steel Treaty (ECSC)



President
Josly Piette

Group II — Employees — Belgium

Lastly, the EESC has set up a Single Market Observatory (SMO), which has 30 members and is chaired by:

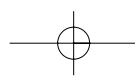


President
Bryan Cassidy

Group I — Employers — United Kingdom

Two ad hoc groups have been instructed to assist the Bureau in its work.

- The Budget Group has nine members and is chaired by:
Dimitrios Dimitriadis,
Vice-President of the EESC
Group I — Greece
- The Communication Group has nine members and is chaired by:
Roger Briesch,
Vice-President of the EESC
Group II — France



sustainable development its international calling card. In this, it can be confident of the support of the European public — this is an area where an important criterion of European identity can be expanded and clarified.

4.3. Culture

As well as preserving our shared heritage and art, culture includes education, training, sport and recreation, and also science and research. Culture thus also provides the basis for any public discussion based on shared values. Culture as a process thus allows room both for diversity and for identity.

If we are serious about creating a European identity based, as Giscard d'Estaing has said, on unity in diversity, we must put the debate about culture on the widest possible basis. For this, too, the EESC is the best-placed institution. I promise that in this area, too, I will have firm proposals for action in December.

5. ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY: EXPERIENCING EUROPE

The key issues in the debate on the future of Europe will be our shared European values and goals. These are the constituent parts of a common European culture, whose social dimension we should keep on emphasising. This culture must not remain the preserve of the elite: people need to change from being spectators to being participants, because only participation can engender a sense of being a stakeholder in society.

Organised civil society is key to all this. It is here that shared values are not only debated, but also lived out. This living culture has the potential to become a channel for the creation of a European consciousness, a European identity.

One of the key elements that brings European politics and civil society together is our Committee, in its role as a bridge between Europe and organised civil society.

6. SUMMARY

I will set out a detailed work programme, which will, as far as I can see standing here today, contain the following key elements.

- (1) **Improving internal communication:** Here I am thinking of creating a specific 'open method of coordination', which makes a firm commitment to transparency.
- (2) **Further strengthening the Committee's position within the institutional framework:** My goal is to conclude a cooperation agreement with the European Parliament, set out a formalised pragmatic strategy for cooperation with the Council, and optimise our relations with the CoR.
- (3) **Formalising and further deepening our relations with representatives of organised civil society at Community level:** Roger Briesch has already laid the foundations for this; we must build on what has already been achieved. This particularly applies to cooperation with the social partners.
- (4) **Definitive clarification of the EESC's role in civil dialogue by creating appropriate working structures:** Here, too, I am not starting from scratch. The activities that began as part of the Convention need to be continued.
- (5) **Groundwork on the 'Communicating Europe' initiative** and cooperation with the appropriate cooperation partners at European, national and local levels.
- (6) **Carrying out specific tasks within our areas of competence in shaping the Union's foreign policy.**
- (7) **Priority action in key areas** such as sustainability, European identity, etc., but also initiatives in areas that affect the Committee's concept of culture. In this area I am basing myself on the Commission's former Forward Studies Unit, which acted as a kind of internal think-tank and gave the Commission significant food for thought.

The Europe we share is a success story: most of its achievements are now taken for granted to such an extent that they are no longer attributed to their source.

However, even if we solve the communication problem, an idea of Europe that looks only to the past cannot help to build a lasting European sense of identity. We therefore need a vision of Europe that looks to the future. Working at and for this Europe is worthwhile, and our Committee, as a platform of organised civil society, has at its disposal all the prerequisites and the means to make a significant contribution.

EESC PRESIDENTS AND VICE-PRESIDENTS SINCE 1958

Term of office	President	Country	Group	Vice-President	Country	Group	Vice-President	Country	Group
1958–60	Mr DE STAERKE	Belgium	I	Mr CANTONI	Italy	III	Mr ROSENBERG	Germany	II
1960–62	Mr ROSENBERG	Germany	II	Mr DE STAERKE	Belgium	I	Mr CANTONI	Italy	III
1962–64	Mr ROCHE	France	III	Mr JONKER	Netherlands	I	Mr ROSENBERG	Germany	II
1964–66	Mr GIUSTINIANI	Italy	I	Mr COOL	Belgium	II	Mr GENIN	France	III
1966–68	Mr MAJOR	Belgium	II	Mr KRAMER	Germany	I	Mr GERMOZZI	Italy	III
1968–70	Mr BERNIS	Luxembourg	III	Mr de PRÉCIGOUT	France	I	Mr BRENNER	Germany	II
1970–72	Mr KUIPERS	Netherlands	I	Mr ASCHOFF	Germany	III	Mr BOULADOUX	France	II
1972–74	Mr LAPPAS	Germany	II	Mr CANONGE	France	III	Mr MASPRONE	Italy	I
1974–76	Mr CANONGE	France	III	Mr AMEYE	Belgium	I	Mr CARROLL	Ireland	II
								(23.5.1975)	
							Mr van GREUNSVEN	Netherlands	(25.6.1975)
1976–78	Mr DE FERRANTI	UK	I	Mr van GREUNSVEN	Netherlands	II	Mr BERNIS	Luxembourg	III
1978–80	Ms BADUEL-GLORIOSO	Italy	II	Mr RENAUD	France	I	Mr ROSEINGRAVE	Ireland	III
	Mr VANNI	Italy	II						
		(28.6.1979)							
1980–82	Mr ROSEINGRAVE	Ireland	III	Mr MILLER	UK	I	Mr LAVAL	France	II
1982–84	Mr CEYRAC	France	I	Mr PFEIFFER	Germany	II	Mr MARGOT	Belgium	III
1984–86	Mr MUHR	Germany	II	Mr NOORDWAL	Netherlands	I	Mr EMO-CAPODILISTA	Italy	III
1986–88	Mr MARGOT	Belgium	III	Mr ZUFIAUR NARVAIZA	Spain	II	Mr POETON	UK	I
1988–90	Mr MASPRONE	Italy	I	Mr JAKOBSEN	Denmark	III	Mr JENKINS	UK	II
1990–92	Mr STAEDLIN	France	II	Mr KAZAZIS	Greece	I	Ms TIEMANN	Germany	III
	Mr GEUENICH	Germany	II						
		(30.1.1992)							
1992–94	Ms TIEMANN	Germany	III	Mr LIVERANI	Italy	II	Mr STECHER NAVARRA	Spain	I
1994–96	Mr FERRER	Spain	I	Mr NIELSEN	Denmark	II	Mr LAUR	France	III
1996–98	Mr JENKINS	UK	II	Mr JASCHICK	Germany	III	Mr REGALDO	Italy	I
1998–2000	Ms RANGONI-MACHIARELLI	Italy	III	Mr PIETTE	Belgium	II	Ms REGNELL	Sweden	I
2000–02	Mr FRERICHS	Germany	I	Mr SIMPSON	UK	III	Mr VINAY	Italy	II
2002–04	Mr BRIESCH	France	II	Mr FRERICHS	Germany	I	Mr NIELSEN	Denmark	III

Outcome of the October plenary session

Further strengthening the position of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) within the European Union's institutional framework; greater clarification of the EESC's role vis-à-vis the social partners; responding to the ever-growing communication challenge; providing a strong contribution to key EU policies such as the Lisbon strategy, sustainable development, the EU in the world and culture; promoting the Constitutional Treaty: these were some of the key areas outlined by Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, following her election as President of the EESC by a very large majority on 27 October, during the EESC's plenary session.

'We need a vision of Europe that looks to the future,' said Ms Sigmund following the election result. 'The Committee, as a platform for organised civil society, has at its disposal all the prerequisites and all the means to make a significant contribution.'

'An idea of a Europe that looks only to the past cannot help to build a lasting European sense of identity,' she continued.

Anne-Marie Sigmund elected President of the European Economic and Social Committee

EU policies: Ms Sigmund's speech at a glance:

□ **On communicating Europe:** 'We (the EESC) will have an important part to play in the EU's emerging communication strategy. In this regard, we have an advantage over the other institutions in the form of direct access to civil society in the 25 Member States. With over 300 national organisations and wider networks, our members hold the key to this.'

□ **On the EU's Lisbon strategy:** 'If it is to work, the strategy must have the active support of the European people. However, the fact that its implementation is losing momentum is testimony to a lack of participation. The Committee can make a significant contribution to resolving this.'

□ **On sustainable development:** 'The European Union has made its commitment to sustainability and to sustainable development its international calling card. In this it can be confident of the support of the European public — an area where an important criterion of European identity can be expanded and clarified.'

□ **Culture:** 'If we are serious about creating a European identity based ... on "unity in diversity", we must give the debate about culture the widest possible focus. I will have firm proposals for action in December.'

Opinions adopted on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, on the implementation of the Lisbon strategy, on the environment as an economic opportunity and on training and productivity

In the opinion drafted by Henri Malosse (rapporteur-general, Group I, Employers, France) on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, prepared at the request of the European Parliament and adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee by an overwhelming majority at its plenary session of 27 and 28 October, five clear messages emerge in favour of ratifying the Treaty.

□ The convention method fully legitimises the process of preparing the Constitutional Treaty, and therefore the Treaty itself.

□ The Constitutional Treaty will help close the democratic gap.

□ Incorporating the Charter for Fundamental Rights is a big step forward in the protection of citizens' rights.

□ The Constitutional Treaty represents a boost to the European model of society.

□ The Constitutional Treaty is only a framework for implementing EU policies so that the EU meets citizens' expectations. There has to be a consistent economic and social project based on a review of the Lisbon strategy.

Four-point communication strategy

With a view to ratification of the Constitutional Treaty by Europe's citizens, the EESC suggests a four-point communication strategy:

- the preparation of 'information tools', which may take the form of 'bite-size' chunks of the Constitution, geared to the concerns of the various categories of the population in each Member State;

- the launching of communication campaigns in the media and other vectors close to ordinary people (such as local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and political groups);

- the organisation of decentralised debates at the initiative of civil society organisations and open to all citizens, so as to spark off exchanges of ideas and thus allow people to form an opinion with full knowledge of the facts;

- the Europeanisation of information campaigns and debates on the Constitutional Treaty, so that ratification is not too dependent on domestic policy issues in the Member States.

'Without citizens' involvement, Lisbon bubble unlikely to wait until 2010 to burst'

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has sent a clear message to the European Council.

Ahead of the Kok report, the EESC plenary concluded that there is a risk of failing to apply sufficient determination to economic, social and environmental reforms while continuing to believe strategy can be delivered.

During its plenary session on 27 October, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted an opinion on the implementation of the Lisbon strategy as it had been asked to do by last March's European Council. The representatives of the various economic and social components of organised civil society in Europe sent a clear and unambiguous message to EU Heads of State or Government, which sets out a view of progress on the Lisbon strategy which has not been stated explicitly until now.

In the past, Member States have favoured debates on objectives already set rather than carrying out a vigorous evaluation and application of reforms already under way. They have increased the number of new aims and commitments but have failed to act. 'There is therefore the risk of failing to apply sufficient determination to the necessary reforms, whilst believing that the strategy can be delivered. Such a Lisbon bubble would be unlikely to wait until 2010 to burst.'

Civil society in Europe is ready to commit itself to the Lisbon reforms but has so far been little involved. 'The Lisbon objectives will not be achieved without civil society being informed, alerted, involved and mobilised.'

Speaking after the debate, Anne-Marie Sigmund, the newly elected President of the EESC, called on the European Council to create a framework in which organised civil society in Europe could assume its responsibilities for the Lisbon objectives. She said the EESC was ready to play a full part in any partnership for reform programme. This message would be delivered to the President of the European Council and to other EU Heads of State or Government.



Roger Briesch hands over the presidency to Anne-Marie Sigmund.

Training and productivity (exploratory opinion at the request of the Dutch Presidency)

Rapporteur: Mr Christoforos Koryfidis (Group II, Employees, Greece)

The draft opinion underlines the importance of clearly defining what continuing training should mean in practice today, whom it concerns and how it can be financed. There is also a need for a European dimension in vocational training policy. Despite all the differences in their education systems, the EU Member States must regard themselves as forming a 'training area'.

The environment as an economic opportunity (exploratory opinion for the Dutch Presidency)

Rapporteur: Mr Stéphane Buffetaut (Group I, Employers, France)

The draft opinion states that environmental needs do not always impair competitiveness and economic development.

Ability of SMEs and companies to adapt to the social economy/economic dynamism (exploratory opinion)

Rapporteur: Mrs Lucia Fusco (Group III, Various interests, Italy)

The draft opinion recommends that the European Commission should re-examine existing and potential interaction between small and medium-sized enterprises and social economy enterprises.

Business competitiveness (exploratory opinion)

Rapporteur: Mr Bruno Vever (Group I, Employers, France)

The draft opinion stresses that the EESC notes that the competitive shortcoming of EU businesses represent the heavy price being paid today for a Europe which is not enterprising enough and which is slow to take decisions.

Industrial change and State aid in the steel sector (own-initiative opinion)

Rapporteur: Mr Lagerholm (Group I, Employers, Sweden)

Past experience with the restructuring of the European steel industry shows that State aid to companies is a double-edged sword: it only benefits particular companies and results in misguided investment.

Health safety: a collective obligation and a new right (own-initiative opinion)

Rapporteur: Mr Bedossa (Group III, Various interests, France)

At European level, public health administration is inadequate and has very weak legal support. It also lacks medical legitimacy, owing to the scarcity of resources. This needs to be improved.

Consumer policy in an enlarged Union

Rapporteur: Mr Pegado Liz (Group III, Various interests, Portugal)

The immediate priorities of EU consumer policy are to consolidate the application of the EU's stock of existing legislation in this area, improve consumer information and education and promote strong and independent consumer organisations.

IN BRIEF

Roger Briesch in Rome for 'new Treaty of Rome' signing ceremony

Roger Briesch, representing the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), attended the official signing ceremony of the Constitutional Treaty, held on 29 October. He was the guest of the Dutch Presidency of the Council and of Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi.



Roger Briesch at the official signing of the new 'Treaty of Rome'.

Andreas Lernhart, Head of the Private Office of Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund



Andreas Lernhart has taken up his post as Head of the Private Office of the new EESC President, Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund. 'I am pleased to be able to contribute to implementing the new president's work programme,' said Mr Lernhart.

Goodbye Thomas Jansen



Thomas Jansen, Head of the Private Office of outgoing President Roger Briesch, ended his career with the Committee at the end of October. 'Thomas has been a constant source of support and inspiration during my presidency,' said President Roger Briesch. 'His help has been invaluable in ensuring my success as president of the Committee during these past two years'.

The European Constitutional Treaty is just a click away!

In order to ensure access to information on the European Constitutional Treaty, the British government has launched an Internet version of the complete text. Although no date has been set yet, the British public are to vote on the text in a referendum. Please visit the website at <http://www.europarl.org.uk/constitution/>.

The hearing entitled 'Tourism policy in the enlarged EU', took place in Katowice, in the Silesian Voivodeship, on 18 November

The hearing was organised by the Katowice Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in close cooperation with the EESC, the Polish Chamber of Tourism, the Polish Agency of Tourist Development and the Polish Tourist Board. During the hearing, a study of the current state of the tourism sector in the new Member States of the EU was examined and the perspectives for development of the sector within the context of the enlarged EU were discussed.

At the meeting, the EESC was represented by Mr Bernardo Hernández Bataller (Group III, Various interests, Spain), the President of the EESC's Section for the Internal Market. Mr Tadeusz Donocik (Group I, Employers, Poland) and Mr Juan Mendoza (Group II, Employees, Spain), rapporteur of the EESC opinion, and other members of the study group were also in attendance.

Among the participants were the representatives of regional Polish authorities and various actors that work in the Polish, Estonian and Hungarian tourism sectors.

Finally, on 19 November, the Polish organisers of the event presented their conclusions with regard to the benchmarking of the tourism sector in Katowice and Crakow.



Hearing: tourism policy in the enlarged EU, Katowice.

The presidents of the economic and social councils of the EU Member States and the European Economic and Social Council adopt a position on the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy



At the invitation of the Economic and Social Council of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the presidents and secretaries-general of the national ESCs and the EESC held their annual meeting in Luxembourg on 25 and 26 November 2004. The meeting focused on ways and means of achieving the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, which are to make Europe 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' by 2010.

In their Luxembourg declaration, the presidents of the national ESCs and the EESC stress the following points.

- Lisbon's three-strand comprehensive strategy and objectives are still relevant and must contribute to improving the well-being of European citizens.
- Public involvement at national and regional levels is vital if the objectives set at European level are to be achieved effectively. The mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy provides the opportunity to hold a broad public debate.
- The multiple processes involved in the three-strand strategy must be streamlined, and coordinated progress is to be properly assessed.
- Thus, in order to achieve the jointly agreed objectives in the longer term, regular assessments of the strategy's results should be part of general policies launched or to be launched at national level. Emphasis therefore must be placed on the concerted implementation of reforms.
- The presidents of the national ESCs and the EESC believe that a coherent and comprehensive summary report on all the various processes should be available for the spring summit.
- The presidents of the national ESCs and the EESC are committed to ensuring continued cooperation on the Lisbon strategy and the follow-up of its implementation between now and 2010.

A joint high-level conference entitled 'Towards a competitive, social and sustainable Europe — Successfully implementing the Lisbon strategy through a pact with organised civil society' will be organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Luxembourg Economic and Social Council in Luxembourg on 26 and 27 January 2005, under Luxembourg's Presidency of the EU.

The text of the Luxembourg declaration of the Economic and Social Councils of the EU Member States and the European Economic and Social Committee is available on the websites of the ESCs (EU Member States) and the EESC (www.esc.eu.int).

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