



The priorities of the  
**European Economic and Social  
Committee** during the  
**Spanish Presidency** of the  
Council of the European Union

January – June 2010



*European Economic and Social Committee*



# The European Economic and Social Committee

## A bridge between Europe and organised civil society

*The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The EESC's consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the Community decision-making process. With views occasionally being diametrically opposed, the EESC's discussions often require real negotiations involving not only the usual social partners, i.e. employers (Group I) and employees (Group II), but also – and this is the distinguishing feature of the EESC – all the other socio-occupational interests represented (Group III). This expertise, these discussions and negotiations and the*

*search for convergence may improve the quality and credibility of the Community decision-making process, inasmuch as they make it more comprehensible and acceptable for Europe's citizens and increase the transparency which is so vital for democracy. Within the European institutional set-up, the EESC fulfils a specific role; it is the prime forum in which the organisations of civil society in the European Union can have their views represented and discussed. As a debating and consultative chamber, the EESC helps to strengthen the democratic credentials of the process of building the European Union, including the promotion of relations between the EU and socio-economic groupings in third countries. In so doing it helps to promote a genuine identification with Europe.*





# The Presidency of the Council of the European Union

*The Council of the European Union brings together ministerial representatives of the governments of the EU Member States, meeting in various formations according to the policy area under discussion. The Council's legislative and political decisions are prepared by a large number of specialised working parties and are fed up through the Permanent Representatives Committee to the Council itself. Member State governments take it in turn to chair the Council's various meetings and to represent the Council vis-à-vis the EU's other institutions and the European Union vis-à-vis the larger world. These presidencies of the Council of the European Union traditionally establish a set of broad political priorities and a work programme.*

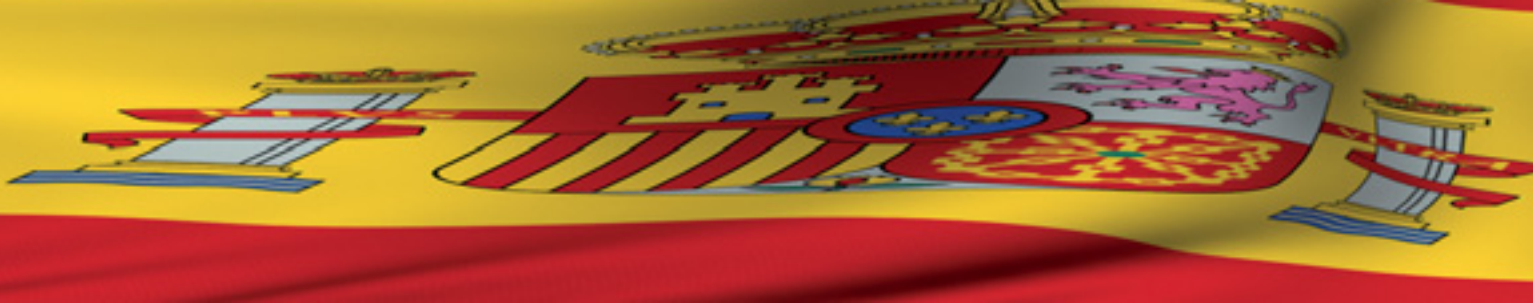
*The Kingdom of Spain holds the presidency for the first half of 2010. Its priorities can be found at <http://www.eu2010.es>.*

*This publication sets out some of the major activities of the European Economic and Social Committee during the period of the Spanish Presidency from January to June 2010.*

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## INTRODUCTION BY PRESIDENT MARIO SEPI

*The Spanish Presidency of the EU will have the honour and, at the same time, the hard task of being the protagonist of a historical phase for Europe: the final entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.*

*The consequences for the activities of the European Economic and Social Committee are enormous: especially in the first half of 2010 the Committee will be engaged in the discussion and analysis of the implications and political perspectives coming from the new Treaty as far as its role and responsibilities are concerned. One of the main areas of work which will be at the core of our actions and reflections is the implementation of participatory democracy: the Committee as a catalyser of the demands and needs of the European civil society has to play its role to the full in order to make participatory democracy a concrete and more functioning reality.*

*This theme goes hand in hand with the commitment towards the issue of fundamental rights. The protection of rights was one of the three main priorities of my Presidency from the very beginning and I intend to continue to push the work of the Committee more and more in depth around this priority.*

*The year 2010 will also be the year of the fight against poverty: there is an emergency at the international and European level in this sense and the EESC has a primary role as regards the importance of the mobilisation of civil society towards this issue: both in terms of outlining good practices among civil society's projects to fight against poverty and in terms of the analysis of the most urgent problems to reduce poverty in Europe as well as in developing countries.*

*The European Economic and Social Committee has a special responsibility with the new treaty opening up new perspectives: the Committee has to invest in its capacity building in order to face all the new challenges that its role will encounter.*

*This will also be the opportunity to translate into practice the provisions and proposals that we tabled through our Programme for Europe: proposals of civil society last April. A renewed and reinforced dialogue with the other institutions, in the context of the Spanish Presidency and the new treaty, will allow the Committee to prove the value of its proposals.*



Mario SEPI, President of the EESC

*In addition to the topics that I have already mentioned there are two more priorities which become particularly crucial for us during the Spanish Presidency of the EU: education as one of the key means to fight against poverty and climate change as the main current global challenge to which all the EU institutions have to respond together and with a common approach.*

*Our expectation is that the Spanish Presidency will make all the necessary efforts to deal with these key issues. It should also demonstrate its active commitment to sending out positive signals about a Europe which is open to the rest of the world.*

*We are confident that an active approach to the current challenges of globalisation is the only way for Europe to steer our society of tomorrow by implementing its social model. This is particularly important in this phase where the social consequences of the crisis are evident and need to be tackled in a decisive manner.*

*I want to reaffirm once again the main message contained in the work programme of my Presidency: Rights and solidarity to guide globalisation. I address this message to the Spanish Presidency as I am convinced that on this basis we will have a solid and fruitful cooperation.*

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# Activities of the European Economic and Social Committee during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

## Communicating Europe in Partnership



Irini Pari  
Vice-President  
President of the Communication Group

At President Sepi's behest, mindful of his slogan "Rights and solidarity to guide globalisation", and under the scrutiny of the EESC's Communication Group, chaired by Vice-President Irini Pari, the European Economic and Social Committee will continue to pursue its role as a committed player in the context of EU communication during the Spanish Presidency.

- The EESC will give special attention to facing globalisation, including the challenges of growth and jobs (re-launching the Lisbon Strategy), immigration, climate change and energy, to defending the European Social Model and to re-launching the world economy.
- In the European year of eradicating poverty it will support the interinstitutional communication priorities outlined above as well as improving relations with national Economic and Social Councils and organised civil society, building on good service to EESC Members.
- It will work to help boost the communication partnership with the other European institutions, in line with its latest opinion on Communicating Europe in Partnership. With its newly formulated Programme for Europe, the EESC will continue to put forward the proposals of civil society to a newly elected European Parliament and a new European Commission.
- In the same interinstitutional context, the EESC will actively participate in communication efforts for the new Reform

Treaty (the Lisbon Treaty), thereby strengthening the principle of participatory democracy.

- The EESC will continue to implement the operational recommendations contained in its opinions on "Plan D, "the White Paper" and the Commission Communication Communicating Europe in Partnership and the visions expressed in its 2008 opinion Reconciling the national and European dimensions of communicating Europe.
- Lastly, the EESC will seek to implement in practice the addendum on communication appended to the November 2005 European Commission-EESC protocol of cooperation, signed in May 2007. That addendum puts the focus on decentralised cooperation and synergies with the European Commission in the area of communication. Communication contact points have been identified and will continue to engage in local events. Furthermore, the EESC will reach out to people from the specialised press by organising a roundtable discussion in Spain during the EU Presidency.

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# The Lisbon Treaty, participatory democracy and civil dialogue

The Committee is pleased that the process of ratifying the Lisbon Treaty is approaching completion and thus that the reforms can be quickly be put in place for equipping the European Union with the right institutional framework and tools for implementing new policies needed to cope with the many challenges facing the Union, which are at the heart of public concerns in Europe, namely the economic and financial crisis, employment, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, climate change and the future of the European social model.

The imponderables of the Lisbon Treaty ratification process, and more generally the reform of the treaties which will have lasted 8 years, should not mean that we lose sight of the fact that the European venture is still a project which will yield dividends for future generations; nevertheless these imponderables also demonstrate yet again the vital need to boost the legitimacy and profile of the project by, amongst other things, ensuring that the European public and the organisations and institutions representing it play a full part in the integration process.

Against this backdrop, civil society participation in the public decision-making process is an essential tool, not only for strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the European institutions and EU action, but also for developing a shared perception of Europe's purpose and where it is heading.

Through its provisions enshrining participatory democracy and introducing a citizen's right of initiative, the Lisbon Treaty opens up significant prospects for the development of Euro-

pean democracy. Participatory democracy and a pro-active approach to citizenship are fundamental principles upon which the success of European Union policies – and hence the Union's very future – depend. Consequently it is essential to secure as broad an involvement of civil society as possible in the political processes at national, regional and local level, encourage the European public to express its actual expectations and, to this end, put in place a genuine strategy for listening and dialogue on Union policies and the public's vision for a common future.

However, achieving this objective requires a genuine and lasting commitment by all EU Institutions to engage in an ongoing dialogue with citizens, and their representative organisations, and to take forward their expectations and demands.

For its part, and in keeping with the tasks assigned to it by the European treaties, the Committee is determined to pursue its initiatives, in close cooperation with the EU institutions and all other civil society players, with a view to contributing, on the one hand, to creating a real European public space of dialogue and debate and, on the other, to instilling new impetus into the European project built on a forward-looking vision of the future of Europe for its citizens.

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# The renewed Lisbon Strategy

Since the Lisbon Strategy was re-launched in 2005 by the European Heads of State and Government, the EESC has considered this to be one of the most important projects for Europe. The EESC firmly believes that in the current crisis the post-2010 Strategy remains an effective framework for fostering sustainable growth and jobs. It is very important to continue and strengthen the Lisbon process continues beyond 2010. Europe needs to pool efforts, and civil society organisations have a particularly important role in this process.

Upon request from the Spanish Presidency the EESC has drawn up an Integrated Report on the implementation and the future of the Lisbon Strategy in the post - 2010 period, to be presented to the Spring Council 2010. The EESC Lisbon Strategy Observatory (LSO) has prepared this report jointly with the national economic and social councils (ESC) and other partner organisations.

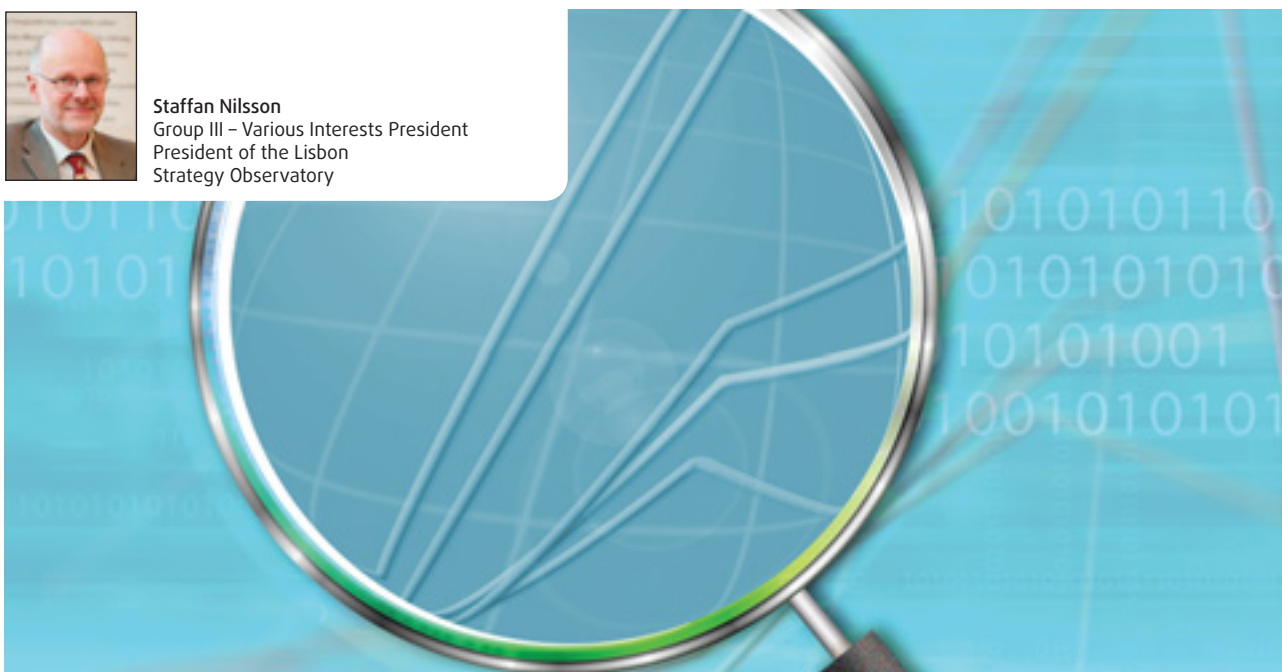
Following the Presidency Conclusions of the Spring Council 2010 the EESC intends to draw-up a civil society action plan for the post-2010 period. For the preparation of the action plan the LSO will work jointly with national ESCs in order to translate European policy guidelines into concrete and measurable objectives for civil society at large.

In this context, the LSO is looking forward to deepening its well-established cooperation with the European Commission in assessing the Member States' progress in the implementation of the Strategy.

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# Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion

## Economic governance, financial markets regulation and supervision

The banking and financial crisis has turned into a deep economic crisis with negative growth and heavy job losses. The EESC will continue to follow up proposals in support of the real economy. It will also contribute to the discussion of better regulation and supervision of the financial sector, among others things through a specific opinion on the Commission's regulatory proposals on new financial supervision in the wake of the *de Larosière Report*.

## Taxation

In the legislative field, the EESC will deliver its opinion on the proposals amending the existing regulation dealing with administrative cooperation in the field of VAT and on introducing an optional, limited and temporary application of the reverse charge mechanism in the common system of VAT. Both proposals seek to prevent and fight cross-border tax fraud. In addition, the Committee plans to make known its views on the upcoming proposals on tax-treatment of multi-purpose vouchers and other promotion schemes and a recast of the directive on taxation of interest and royalty payments.

In the non-legislative field, the EESC expects to be consulted on coordination initiatives dealing with inheritance taxes and withholding taxes in cross-border situations, as well as on the impact of internal market principles on double taxation tax treaties.

## Economic, social and territorial cohesion

The European Commission has requested the Committee to deliver an exploratory opinion on effective partnerships in EU cohesion policy. The opinion is scheduled for the first half of 2010 and will be presented at two conferences, one organised by the Commission and the other by the EESC. The opinion will give examples of best practice in the partnership field and



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also show that where an effective partnership exists the quality and impact of projects co-financed by the Cohesion Funds is clearly superior.

In connection with its own-initiative opinion on *Innovation in tourism: defining a strategy towards sustainable development in islands*, the EESC will hold an external hearing on the island of Malta in February 2010. The aim of this opinion is to highlight the specific problems facing islands and to show how, despite the current economic and financial crisis, innovative solutions in the area of island tourism can promote growth and employment in a sustainable and responsible way.

The new treaty which will enter into force in 2010 will introduce territorial cohesion alongside economic and social cohesion. The Committee, which has made several contributions on this new competence, is prepared to assist the Spanish Presidency in its work to implement this new policy.

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# Single Market, Production and Consumption, Better Regulation and the Single Market Observatory



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## Consumer Protection

European consumer policy is a priority of the INT Section, which will co-organise a European Consumers' day in Madrid on 15 March 2009 with the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency on the topic of practical application of the Community acquis in the area of consumption. This general topic could be divided into sub-topics. The details will be determined in due course after consulting the Spanish Presidency and DG SANCO.

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## Industrial policy and competitiveness

Competitiveness is one of the key elements of the Lisbon Strategy. RDTI, issues relating to intellectual property and proprietary rights, support for SMEs and industrial policy are all important issues, particularly in a period of crisis. The section is currently preparing opinions on most of these subjects, which will in all likelihood be adopted during the Spanish Presidency.

## Financial services

The economic and financial crisis calls for strong measures to in the field of financial markets. The Committee will most probably be asked to make known its views on various initiatives dealing with banking and insurance matters and will adopt opinions during the Spanish Presidency on alternative investment funds, capital fund managers and credit access.

## Tourism

Tourism is an area which will gain new importance under the Lisbon Treaty and to which the Spanish Presidency attaches particular importance. Initiatives in the area of social tourism are currently under preparation and the EESC, which has always been active in this field, is likely to be called upon once again to take a stand.

## Single Market Observatory

The Single Market Observatory (SMO), which was set up in 1994 to identify shortcomings in the Single Market, propose solutions and help the EU legislator refine its proposals, will continue to focus on Better Regulation issues. This will also include cooperation with various platforms such as the *European University Institute* (EUI), the *Centre for European Policy Studies* (CEPS) and the *European Policy Centre* (EPC). The SMO database on European self- and co-regulation, which involve close cooperation with the European Commission, will also contribute to external activities (e.g. those of *The Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law*, HiiL, and the *Bertelsmann Foundation*). The SMO intends to contribute to the discussion on better regulating and supervising the financial sector. Here, some form of cooperation with the ECO Section would be desirable.

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# Employment, Social Policy and Citizenship, Immigration and Integration



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At the request of the Spanish Presidency, the SOC Section will draw up three key exploratory opinions. The first, on *People with disabilities: employment and accessibility*, will be adopted in March 2010 and will be presented to the Informal Meeting of Disability Ministers in May. That will be followed by an exploratory opinion on *Training for social inclusion: a tool for fighting poverty and social exclusion*. This will be an important contribution by the EESC to the 2010 European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion and to the Spanish Presidency conference in April on *Youth employment and social inclusion*. Thirdly, the SOC Section will prepare an exploratory opinion on the *Integration of immigrant workers*, with a view to the Ministerial Conference on *Integration* in April and drawing on the considerable portfolio of EESC opinions and activity in this area.

Indeed, immigration and integration will be a key issue during the Spanish Presidency. The recent SOC opinion on the *Stockholm Programme* is an important contribution. The SOC Section will also continue to press ahead, in close cooperation with the European Commission, in organising meetings of the newly-created *European Integration Forum*.

Employment will clearly be a high priority during the Spanish Presidency. Important SOC opinions can be expected on the *Employment guidelines* and on *Trends in self-employed work*; the own-initiative opinion on this subject, *Self-employment, entrepreneurship and quality work*, will be presented to the Spanish Presidency conference in April on. Likewise, the strategically important SOC opinion on *New skills for new jobs* will be a useful contribution to the Spanish Presidency conference in April on *New skills for the future of employment*. Gender equality, another priority of the Spanish Presidency, will also be addressed in a SOC exploratory opinion, requested by the European Commission, on the *Future strategy for equality between women and men after 2010*, which will be adopted at the beginning of 2010. Recent SOC-Labour Market Observa-

tory reports on gender equality at work and on work-life balance will also be useful in this context. Another key input by the SOC Section to employment conditions and workers' rights will be an own-initiative opinion to be adopted early in the Spanish Presidency on the *Social dimension of the Internal Market*.

The SOC Section will also continue to focus on the challenges facing young people and children, with opinions to be adopted at the start of the Spanish Presidency on *Promoting the learning mobility of young people* and on *Early childhood care and education*.

Health inequalities will be the key priority of the Spanish Presidency. The SOC Section will contribute to the Council Conclusions on this topic with its up-coming opinion on *Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU*. It will also work with the Presidency on the issue of *safety and quality of organ donation and transplantation* as well as on *chronic diseases* (cardiovascular and mental health).

## Labour Market Observatory

The Labour Market Observatory, set up in 2007, has carried out intensive work on sustainable productivity growth and quality of working life, on the employment situation of people with a disability, on women and the labour market, on equal opportunities and work-life balance, on the situation of ageing workers, on the impact of the crisis and active labour market policies, on new skills for new jobs, trends in self-employed work and on immigration and the labour market. It will continue its in-depth review of pertinent labour market issues during the Spanish Presidency.

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# Agriculture, Rural Development, Environment, Sustainable Development

During the Spanish Presidency in the first half of 2010 the Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment will undertake activities in its usual fields of activity. Specific topics, in particular in the area of the environment and sustainable development, include climate change and follow up of the UN summit in Copenhagen, reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme and animal welfare.



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## Agriculture

At the request of the Spanish Presidency, the EESC is drawing up an opinion on *The Community agricultural production model: adding value to products and consumer safety*.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy for the post-2013 period is a very important issue, also for the incoming Spanish Presidency. An own-initiative opinion on *The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in 2013* is currently being drawn up and is scheduled for adoption in March 2010. The EESC position should be clearly defined on the comprehensive reform of the CAP after 2013.

An own-initiative opinion is being drawn up on the *Future strategy for the milk sector*, which examines the need for strategic management of EU milk production in the post-2015 period. It will identify whether there is a need for clear guidelines to ensure a more sustainable milk production system throughout the EU and/or a need to reconsider market management instruments.

## Fisheries

The EESC is currently working on an opinion on the *Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy*, which will be a controversial and much disputed topic and one of great relevance to the Spanish Presidency. The sector is currently characterised by over-fishing, non-profitable fisheries, the prevalence of short-term perspectives, and the need for public support for the sector.



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# Sustainable Development Observatory



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The Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) is working in several areas that will be of relevance to the Spanish Presidency, including the follow up of the international climate change negotiations in Copenhagen and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

As regards climate change, adaptation and how to involve the developing countries in efforts in this field (including financing) and transfer of technologies will remain high on the agenda.

The Committee will start working on the Commission's communication on *Beyond GDP* in December 2009. However, the main part of the work will be carried out in the first quarter of 2010. A hearing is planned in order to provide additional stakeholder contributions.

An SDO conference will be organised on sustainable cities during the first half of 2010 (in Paris or Bordeaux), with a special focus on sustainable urban transport.

The SDO is also planning to organise a meeting in collaboration with the Regional Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Innovation of Extremadura, Spain, centred on two elements of the Programme for Europe: renewal through sustainable development and managing our natural capital sustainably.

Proposals for a possible 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme will start to be rolled out during the first part of 2010. The EESC will participate in the preparatory work.

In addition to these topics, a number of referrals are likely to arrive from the Commission on environmental legislative proposals.

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# Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society



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## Road transport and urban mobility

Following the request of the Spanish Presidency, the EESC will draw up an exploratory opinion on *European transport policy – Lisbon Strategy and sustainable development*. This opinion aims to look into concrete ways for the transport sector to address the need to increasingly promote environmental protection, sustainable mobility and low carbon energy resources while increasing competitiveness and economic and social cohesion in the EU. In the field of urban transport, the EESC will concentrate on the preparation of its opinion on the EU Action Plan on urban mobility. A major public event on urban mobility could be held in June 2010.

## Trans-European Transport Networks

The Trans-European Transport Networks policy is currently under substantial review. The European Commission has carried out extensive consultations and the first policy guidelines should be presented during the Spanish Presidency. The EESC has been directly involved, inter alia through its participation in an EC expert Group. It is preparing an opinion on the *Transport connections between the EU and Africa*, which will be of great relevance to the Spanish Presidency.

## Air Transport

The EESC will probably receive a request for an exploratory opinion on *Trans-Atlantic relations between the EU and South American countries in the air transport sector – a horizontal air transport agreement with Brazil*. This topic is politically important as during the Spanish Presidency the Commission is going to negotiate and hopefully conclude a horizontal air transport agreement with Brazil. The EESC can build upon the input of the exploratory opinion on *Trans-Atlantic relations between the EU and North American countries in the air transport sector – a true regulatory convergence* (adopted in 2009), which was requested by the Czech Presidency. Given its close links with Brazilian civil society, the EESC can provide very practical insight on the planned EU-Brazil agreement. The Committee may also be requested by the Spanish Presidency to prepare another exploratory opinion on the global strategy for preventing air accidents.

## Energy

It is envisaged that the Spanish Presidency will request the EESC to draw up an exploratory opinion on *EU Energy Policy under the Lisbon Treaty: A European Community for Renewable Energy? A public hearing in Spain might be organised in this connection in collaboration with CIEMAT*. The follow-up of the Copenhagen Climate Summit will certainly mean that the EESC will be active in the related energy domain.

## Information Society

It is planned that the EESC will contribute to the debate on the post i2010 *Digital Europe* strategy, which will identify the new agenda for EU policy related to the information society. In particular, it is planned to contribute to the debate on the *Charter of telecoms users' rights*, drawing on our relevant opinion on the Universal Service into account. Other issues that might be discussed during the Spanish Presidency with a possible contribution from the Committee are related to the future of the Internet, the new generation networks (NGNs) and the management of spectrum, notably the digital dividend, and the promotion of a safer Internet, especially for young people.

## Services of General Interest

The EESC will soon adopt an own-initiative opinion on the clarification of distribution of competencies between the EU and the Member States concerning services of general economic interest, an issue which is at the heart of the European debate. In line with the EESC's Programme for Europe and in expectation of the completion of the Lisbon Treaty ratification process, the permanent study group on services of general interest (SGI) will continue to highlight the need for a Community initiative to establish guidelines on SGI in the light of the importance of the EU's social and territorial cohesion.

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# Industrial Change



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In general terms, the CCMI will put its expertise and experience into supporting the Spanish Presidency in its stated key area of interest, viz: a competitive and open Europe which is socially responsible and respects the environment. In so doing, the CCMI will continue its examination of proposals to pursue the goals of the renewed Lisbon Strategy, due to see the light of day during the Spanish presidency.

More specifically, the CCMI will seek to actively follow up its recent opinion on the impact of the global crisis on the main manufacturing and services sectors, which unfortunately will remain a topical issue during the first half of 2010; shipbuilding, the motorcycle industry and the heavy printing industry will be the focus of special attention. In addition, the CCMI will take a future-oriented look at the ways forward for building a more stable and sustainable future. In this context, it will draw up an opinion on European technology, industrial and science parks in the period of crisis management in

preparation for the post-crisis and post-Lisbon Strategy period; this opinion will thus cover several of the Spanish Presidency's priorities. The CCMI possesses expertise and experience in all of these areas, which it is ready to draw on to provide updates and reviews to the Spanish Presidency, based partly on hearings to be held during this period, including in Spain.

The CCMI intends to continue its programme of events designed to disseminate methods employed both to mitigate and to pre-empt the effects of industrial change in both the 'new' and 'old' Member States. The CCMI intends to extend this to include similar discussions involving bordering states such as Ukraine.

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# Europe in the World



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Group I – Employers  
President of the REX Section (External Relations)

In connection with the **enlargement process**, the EESC will hold a meeting of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 12 and 13 April 2010. A meeting of the EU-Croatia JCC will also take place in Brussels in April 2010, whilst the second meeting of the EU-The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia JCC will be held in Skopje in February 2010. The EESC will organise its third Western Balkans Civil Society Forum in June 2010. The Spanish Presidency will be invited to attend these meetings. An opinion on the EU-Montenegro relations will be adopted.

Regarding **relations with the EU Eastern Neighbours**, in March 2010 the EESC will organise, in Kiev in March 2010, a second joint seminar in Kiev with the Ukrainian National Tripartite Social and Economic Council (NTSEC) on civil society involvement in the implementation of the EU – Ukraine Association Agreement. A third joint workshop between the EESC and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, with active involvement by other economic and social players, will be held in Moscow in June 2010. Representatives of the Spanish Presidency will be involved in these events.

As far as **relations with Southern Partner Countries** are concerned, the EESC will draw up an opinion on EU-Morocco relations that will be submitted to the Spanish Presidency as our contribution to the EU-Morocco Summit in spring 2010. Two opinions will be adopted on agriculture in the Euromed and handicapped people in the Euromed.

As regards **relations between the EESC and Asia**, both the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the China-EU civil society Round Table (to take place in Chongtqing, China); and the next EU-India civil society Round Table will be held during the Spanish Presidency. An EU-Japan civil society joint event will take place in 2010.

The EESC will organise the 11th Regional Seminar of **ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups**, in Addis Ababa in May 2010, with representatives of socio-economic interest groups from the fifteen countries of East and South Africa. The EESC will invite representatives of the Spanish Presidency to attend this event. The EESC's ACP-EU Follow-up Committee will also participate in the 19th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, due to take place in Spain from 29 March to 1 April. In addition, the EESC will be actively involved in the implementation of the EC-CARIFORUM trade agreement.

The EESC will adopt an opinion on social and economics aspects in **EU-Latin America relations**, including the social dimension of innovation, which will serve as the basis for discussions in its Sixth Meeting of Civil Society Organisations from Latin America and the Caribbean (Madrid, 5-7 May 2010). This meeting will contribute civil society views to the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Head of States Summit, which is due to be held during the Spanish Presidency (Madrid, 17-18 May 2010). The 2nd EU-Brazil civil society Round Table will be held in Brazil in January 2010.

In the area of **transatlantic relations**, the EESC will adopt two opinions on EU relations with Canada and on the promotion of the European social model within our relations with the USA.

As far as **trade issues** are concerned, the EESC will adopt an opinion on trade and climate change and another on fair trade. The monitoring of ongoing negotiations at multilateral and regional level will continue.

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# The European Economic and Social Committee



**Mario Sepi**  
President



**Irini Pari**  
Vice-President  
President of the Communication Group



**Seppo Kallio**  
Vice-President  
President of the Budget Group



**Henri Malosse**  
President of  
the Group I – Employers



**Georgios Dassis**  
President of  
the Group II – Employees



**Staffan Nilsson**  
President of  
the Group III  
– Various Interests



**Martin Westlake**  
Secretary General

The European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative body set up by the Rome Treaties in 1957. It consists of representatives of the various economic and social components of organised civil society. Its main task is to advise the three major institutions (European Parliament, Council of the European Union and European Commission).

It is mandatory for the EESC to be consulted on those issues stipulated in the Treaties and in all cases where the institutions deem it appropriate. It can also be consulted on an exploratory basis by one of the other institutions, or can itself take the initiative to issue opinions (around 15% of its opinions are own-initiative opinions). The EESC adopts on average 150 opinions a year on a wide range of subjects

concerning European integration. It therefore plays an active role in the Community decision-making process.

The EESC also has two complementary tasks: first, involving civil society organisations more in the European venture, and, second, boosting the role of civil society organisations in non-member countries or groups of countries, such as the countries applying for EU membership, with which very active consultative committees have been set up; the Euromed countries bordering the Mediterranean; African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries; Mercosur countries (Latin America); and India, amongst others. The EESC holds structured dialogue with representatives of civil society organisations in these countries and regions, and promotes the creation of

consultative structures based on its own model. Thanks to the EESC, building Europe is therefore the task not only of the European Union and politicians, but also of members of the public belonging to organisations involved in economic, social and cultural life.

The EESC is made up of 344 members split into three groups: the "Employers" group, the "Employees" group and the "Various Interests" group, which brings together representatives of sectors of economic and social life that are not covered by the first two groups, that is, bodies representing craftsmen, farmers, SMEs, the professions, consumers in the social economy, family associations and associations promoting the rights of people with disabilities and combating exclusion, the general interest, etc. The EESC's membership is not static. It changes with each four-yearly renewal so as to reflect changes in civil society in the Member States as accurately as possible. The last EESC renewal – which covers the next four-year period – took place in October 2006. A total of 30% of members were newly appointed.

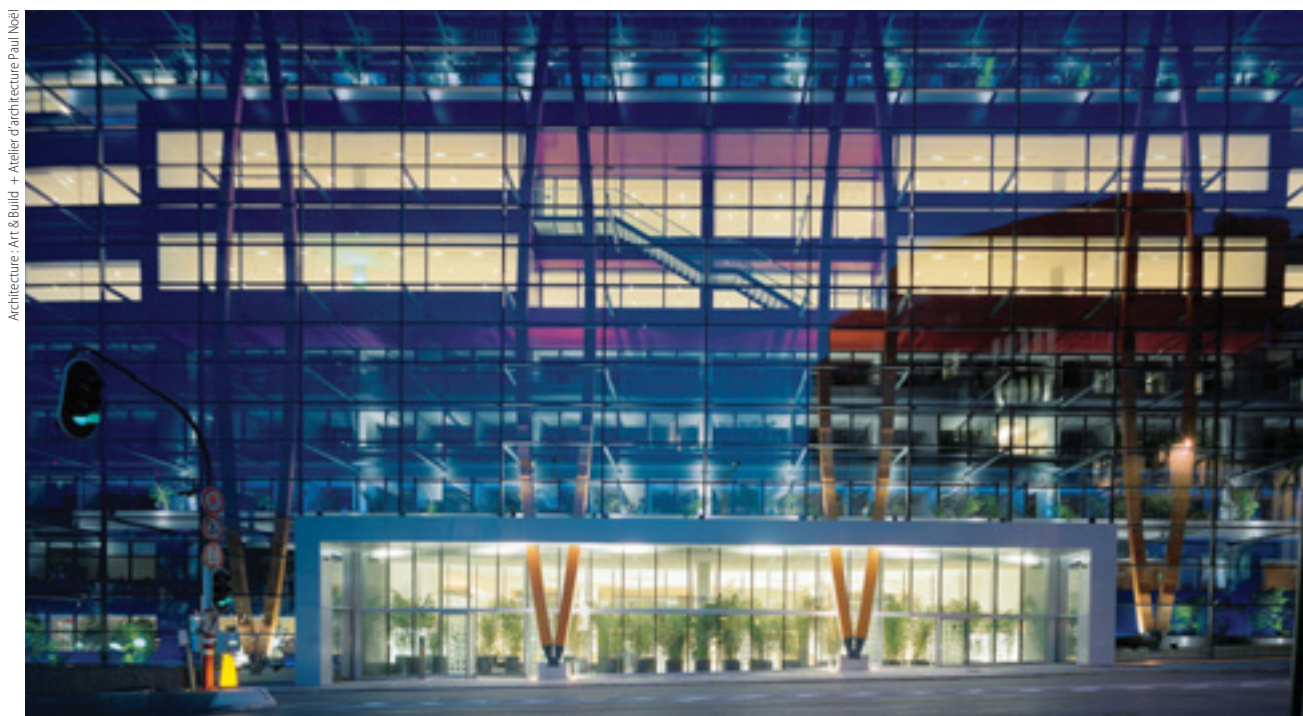
Until September 2010, the EESC Presidency will be held by Mr Mario Sepi (Workers' group, Italy), assisted by two vice-presidents, Ms Irini Pari (Employers Group, Greece) and Mr Seppo Kallio (Various Interests Group, Finland). The EESC Secretariat is headed by Mr Martin Westlake, Secretary-General.

## Links between the European Economic and Social Committee and the national economic and social councils and other similar bodies

The EESC and economic and social councils and similar institutions have in close cooperation built an important network at EU level. In the EU's Member States, this cooperation is based on regular meetings on specific subjects (in particular on the renewed Lisbon Strategy), the exchange of information and the development of a joint website (<http://eesc.europa.eu/ceslink/08-en/presentation-ceslink-en.html>).

It also participates actively in the work of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (IAESCSI), the members of which span 50 countries.

Lastly, the EESC maintains regular relations with civil society organisations in the countries applying for EU membership and in several countries or country groupings outside the European Union. These activities are carried out jointly with the economic and social councils of the relevant countries.



Architecture: Art & Build + Atelier d'architecture Paul Noël



# The Spanish Members of the European Economic and Social Committee



**Barbadillo López, Rafael**

*Member of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations (CEOE)*

- Member of Group I – Employers
- Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)
- Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)



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- Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)



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- External Relations (REX)



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- Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT)
- External Relations (REX)

# Priorities for the Spanish Presidency of the Council January – June 2010\*

## Lisbon Treaty

Depending on the results of the Swedish Presidency, implementation of the new institutional arrangements provided for under the Lisbon Treaty.

## Economic recovery

Ensure economic recovery and the pursuit of a model of stable growth, of a new sustainable economy based on innovation (both technological, above all in the area of ICTs, and other types) and generator of quality jobs (reconciliation of working and family life will receive special attention in this context). Spain will work for the adoption of the new framework for financial regulation and supervision.

## Lisbon strategy

Spain will endeavour to work for a post-Lisbon strategy which is above all a wide-ranging pact for employment and quality work; a pact for the promotion of social dialogue; a pact for a labour market characterised by the involvement of companies and workers, reflecting better governance. Spain will promote a new European Social Agenda as a complement to the post-Lisbon strategy.

## European citizenship and fundamental rights

Spain will focus on promoting better protection of European citizens in non-EU countries (inter alia, by improving consular assistance). Combating discrimination and violence against women. Promoting solidarity between social groups and between territories.

## Area of freedom, security and justice

The first evaluation of the European Pact for Immigration and Asylum will be made during the Spanish Presidency. Launch of a debate on integration as driver of economic development and social cohesion and a debate on employment and migration policy. Increased police cooperation to counter terrorism (increased coordination between Member States) and drug trafficking.

## Europe in the world

Spain will seek to ensure that the EU does more to develop common policies in the fields of climate change, energy policy and fighting poverty. Spain will endeavour to strengthen EU ties with the Maghreb and to develop trans-Atlantic relations with the United States and with Latin America and the Caribbean.

\* These are the provisional priorities of the Spanish Presidency as they stood at the time of publication of this document. These priorities may well be subject to change.



# Some basic facts about the Kingdom of Spain



Capital	Madrid
Other major cities	Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Zaragoza, Malaga, Palma de Mallorca, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Bilbao
Population	46 661 950
Language	One national language: Spanish (Castellan), 4 regional languages (Basque, Catalan, Galician, Valencian)
Currency	Euro
Surface area	504 782 km <sup>2</sup>
GDP	EUR 972 billion
Unemployment rate	17.9 %
Life expectancy	83 years for women, 78 years for men

## Head of State

His Majesty King Juan Carlos I

## Prime Minister

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

## Minister of Foreign Affairs

Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé

## Secretary of State for the European Union

Diego Lopez Garrido

**The institutions.** The Spanish constitution of 1978, described as the constitution of consensus, was drafted on the basis of negotiations and agreements between the different political parties with parliamentary representation.

**The Constitutional Court**, composed of 12 members, is the supreme authority on constitutional interpretations. It operates independently of other constitutional authorities and is subject only to the Spanish constitution and the regulations established in Organic Law 2/1979 of 3 October, as amended on several occasions.

**The Crown.** The political form of the Spanish state is that of a parliamentary monarchy. The king, in his capacity as the head of state, symbolises the unity and permanence of the state. He arbitrates and moderates in the regular running of institutions and acts as the highest representative of the Spanish state in international relations.

**The government exercises** executive and statutory power in the Kingdom of Spain. It is a parliamentary government, which governs in the name of the King. It is headed by the President of the Government (Prime Minister), elected by the Congress of Representatives. The government is assisted by and collaborates with a number of bodies, which – under Chapter II of Title I of Government Law 50/97 of 27 November – are the Secretaries of State, the General Committee of Secretaries of State and Under-Secretaries, the Government Secretariat, and the ministerial cabinets.

The government of the IXth Legislature has been in office since 14 April 2008. It is headed by the Socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

**Spanish Parliament (Cortes Generales)** – the legislative authority of the State is exercised by the Spanish Parliament which represents the Spanish people and controls the administration's actions. It has two houses: the Congress of Representatives and the Senate. Representatives and senators are elected for four years.

**The Congress of Representatives** has 350 members. Every draft and proposed law, without exception, must be studied first by this house. The Senate has the power to veto or amend the texts written by the Congress, which is then responsible for the final decision after studying it again.

**The Senate** is designed by the constitution as the house of territorial representation. In this 9<sup>th</sup> Legislature, this house has a total of 264 senators.

## The territorial organisation of the State

### The Autonomous Regions and Cities with Statutes of Autonomy

The 1978 Constitution acknowledged and guaranteed the right of the nationalities and regions that comprise the Spanish nation to be autonomous, and the solidarity between them all. The development of the provisions of the constitution has led to a complete overhaul of the territorial organisation of the state. As a result of this process, Spain has become one of the most decentralised countries in Europe with 17 autonomous regions and 2 autonomous cities.

### Local Authorities

There are 50 provinces and 8 111 municipalities.

**Justice.** According to the constitution, justice rests with the people and is administered on the King's behalf by the judges and magistrates of the judiciary branch. Emphasis must be placed, above all, on jurisdictional unity; in Spain, justice is administered by a single corps of judges and magistrates.

**The Supreme Court** is the state's highest jurisdictional authority, except on matters of constitutional guarantees, which fall to the Constitutional Court. Its chairman, who also chairs the General Council of the Judiciary Power, is proposed by this body and appointed by the king.

**The General Council of the Judiciary Power** is the body that governs judges and magistrates. This council is led by the chairman of the Supreme Court, and consists of 20 other members who serve 5-year terms and must be proposed by a three-fifths majority of Parliament and appointed by the King.

**The Chief Prosecutor** is proposed by the administration and appointed by the king after consulting with the General Council of the Judiciary Power. The purpose of the Crown Prosecution Office is to take or instigate all necessary judicial actions for safeguarding citizens' rights and public interests protected by law, either ex-officio or at the request of the interested parties.

### Political parties

- Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE), currently in power
- People's Party (Partido Popular, PP) Convergence and Union (Convergència i Unió, CIU)



- Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC)
- Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV)
- Nationalist Galician Bloc (Bloque Nacionalista Galego, BNG)
- United Left – Initiative for Catalonia Ecologists (Izquierda Unida-Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds – IU-ICV)
- Canary Coalition (Coalición Canaria, CC)
- Navarre People's Union (Unión del Pueblo Navarro, UPN)
- Navarre Yes (Nafarroa Bai, NaBai)
- Union for Progress and Democracy (Unión Progreso y Democracia, UPyD)

#### Some useful websites:

Official site of the Spanish government

[www.la-moncloa.es](http://www.la-moncloa.es)

At this site, see in particular:

[www.la-moncloa.es/Espana/Espaniahoy/default.htm](http://www.la-moncloa.es/Espana/Espaniahoy/default.htm)  
(updated information on Spain)

Official site of the Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union in Brussels:

[www.es-ue.org](http://www.es-ue.org)

Spanish Statistical Office:

[www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)

Ministry of Public Administrations' website on the autonomous regions:

[www.map.es/documentacion/politica\\_autonomica/](http://www.map.es/documentacion/politica_autonomica/)

The official website for tourism in Spain: [www.spain.info/](http://www.spain.info/)

# Programme of Events for 2010

Conferences, seminars, hearings and extraordinary meetings  
1<sup>st</sup> half of the year

## 1. EESC ACTIVITIES

### HORIZONTAL INITIATIVES

Youth plenary at the EESC headquarters (COMM)	<i>Brussels, 15-17 April</i>
Going local event with the Communication Group and EESC Communication contact points (COMM)	<i>Spain, 25 June</i>
Seminar for Europ Direct Centres(COMM)	<i>Brussels, April</i>
Extraordinary Bureau meeting	<i>Madrid, 22 June</i>

### GROUP ACTIVITIES

Extraordinary meeting of Group I	<i>Madrid, April</i>
Conference organised by Insuleur with the assistance of Group I on <i>Tourism and the agri-food industry</i>	<i>Tenerife, date to be confirmed</i>
Visit by Group I President	<i>Mellila, date to be confirmed</i>
Group III Bureau will meet representatives of Spanish civil society organisations and members of the Spanish Economic and Social Council to exchange views and discuss <i>The sustainable economy and the new Lisbon Strategy</i>	<i>Madrid, 5 March (to be confirmed)</i>

### SECTION ACTIVITIES

#### SINGLE MARKET, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Meeting of the INT/509 study group (on the Communication entitled Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world), public hearing on the same subject and visit to the Institute of Prospective Technology (attached to the European Commission's Joint Research Centre)	<i>Seville, 14-15 February 2010</i>
European Consumer Day (ECD) 2010, organised jointly with the Spanish Presidency and the European Commission. Theme to be determined in collaboration with the Spanish Presidency	<i>Madrid, 15 March</i>
External public hearing of the SMO Theme to be determined in collaboration with the Spanish presidency	<i>Alicante (OAMI) (proposed venue), 20-21 May (proposed date)</i>
Public hearing on the <i>28<sup>th</sup> Regime</i> (SMO)	<i>Brussels, date to be confirmed</i>
Public hearing on <i>Car repairs</i> (SMO)	<i>Brussels, date to be confirmed</i>



## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Extraordinary section bureau meeting	Melilla, 8 February
2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the EU-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee	Skopje, 24 February
EESC-NTSEC Ukraine Joint seminar	Ukraine, March
7 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Croatia Joint Consultative Committee	Brussels, 8 April
EU-Turkey civil society Joint Consultative Committee	Turkey, 12-13 April
EU-China civil society Round Table	China, April
11 <sup>th</sup> Regional Seminar of ACP-EU Economic and Social Interest Groups	Addis Ababa, May
6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of EU-Latin America and the Caribbean civil society organisations	Madrid, 5-7 May
Meeting of the Bureau of the EEA Consultative Committee and the meeting of the Consultative Committee	Venue to be confirmed, May
EESC-Japan seminar	Brussels, May/June
3 <sup>rd</sup> Western Balkans Civil Society Forum	Brussels, 28-29 June
3 <sup>rd</sup> Joint Workshop EESC-Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation	Moscow, June
EU-India Round Table	India, date to be confirmed

## EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CITIZENSHIP

Hearing on <i>Integration of immigrant workers</i>	Brussels, 14 January
Various Labour Market Observatory hearings	Brussels, February-June
European Integration Forum meeting	Zaragoza (to be confirmed), April
Joint SOC/REX/ILO meeting on <i>Social consequences of the economic crisis</i>	Geneva (to be confirmed), April-May

## AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT

2 <sup>nd</sup> Study group meeting on Aquaculture (NAT/445) and public hearing on <i>Sustainable future for Aquaculture</i> with the participation of the members of the Study Group on the <i>Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy</i> (NAT/443)	Vigo, 14-15 January
Meeting of the section and the Sustainable Development Observatory. The section agenda will include, inter alia, the exploratory opinion on the Community agricultural production model: product promotion and consumer safety. Presentation of the exploratory opinion and public hearing with the participation of the main stakeholders.	Logrono, 11-12 March
Meeting with the Regional Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Innovation of Extremadura centred on two elements of the Programme for Europe: Renewal through sustainable development, and Managing our natural capital sustainably.	Merida, mid-April
Conference on product promotion and consumer safety (follow-up of the opinion NAT/455)	Extremadura, April 2010 (to be confirmed)

## ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION

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Hearing on <i>Innovation in tourism: Defining a strategy towards sustainable development in islands</i>	<i>Malta, February</i>
Hearing on <i>Socially responsible financial products</i>	<i>Madrid, date to be confirmed</i>
Conference on <i>Effective partnership in cohesion policy</i>	<i>Brussels, date to be confirmed</i>

## TRANSPORT, ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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Public event on urban mobility	<i>Brussels, June</i>
Hearing on <i>Green jobs (TEN/401)</i>	<i>Brussels, 14 January</i>
Hearing on EU energy policy	<i>Madrid, April</i>
Conference on employment and training in the maritime transport sector	<i>Brussels, 11 March</i>

## CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL CHANGE

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Hearing on <i>EU policy to rationalise the heavy printing industry in Europe</i>	<i>Germany, date to be confirmed</i>
Hearing on <i>European technology, industrial and science parks and visit to the European Institute of Technology</i>	<i>Budapest, date to be confirmed</i>
Seminar on <i>Industrial policy in a period of transition</i>	<i>Kiev, date to be confirmed</i>

## 2. EESC PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL EVENTS

### HORIZONTAL INITIATIVES

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Open Day (COMM)	<i>Brussels, 8 May</i>
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### SECTION ACTIVITIES

#### EXTERNAL RELATIONS

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19 <sup>th</sup> Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly	<i>Madrid, 29 March – 1 April</i>
International Forum on Social Cohesion in Latin America, organised by the European Commission	<i>Lima, 8-10 February</i>
4 <sup>th</sup> session of the EU-Latin America Joint Parliamentary Assembly	<i>Seville, 11-12 May</i>
Euromed Joint Parliamentary Assembly	<i>Venue and date to be confirmed</i>
EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting	<i>Venue and date to be confirmed</i>

#### EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CITIZENSHIP

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Inaugural conference on <i>European Year 2010 against Poverty and Social Exclusion</i>	<i>Madrid, 21 January</i>
Informal EPSSCO	<i>Barcelona, 28-30 January</i>
Presidency Conference on the <i>Safety and Quality Standards of Organ Donations and Transplantations</i>	<i>Madrid, 16-18 March</i>
Congress on Fundamental Liberties and Workers Rights	<i>Oviedo, 17-18 March</i>



Conference on <i>Institutionalisation of Corporate Social Responsibility as the result of the permanent and multilateral dialogue and its impact on the improvement of the competitiveness of companies</i>	Palma de Mallorca, 25-26 March
Informal meeting of Ministers of Equality and conference on <i>Women in the context of the Economic Crisis and Post-Lisbon</i>	Valencia, 25-26 March
Presidency Conference on <i>Mental Health and Elderly People</i>	March
International Conference on <i>New Skills for the Future of Employment</i>	Barcelona, 8-9 April
EU Youth Conference on <i>Structured Dialogue on Youth Employment and Social Inclusion</i>	Jerez de la Frontera, 13-15 April
Conference on <i>Self-employment, Entrepreneurship and Work Quality</i>	Seville, 15-16 April
Conference on <i>Active Inclusion</i>	Burgos, 20 April
Presidency Conference on <i>Health Inequalities and Social Determinants</i>	Madrid, 20-21 April
Conference on <i>Minimum Pensions, Maturing of Social Security Systems and its Contribution to Social Inclusion</i>	Burgos, 22-23 April
International Conference on <i>Contribution and Mid-term Review of the EU Strategy on Health and Security at Work (2007-2010)</i>	Barcelona, 22-23 April
Ministerial Conference on <i>Integration</i>	Zaragoza, April
Informal EPSCO Council	End of April
Informal Meeting of Disability Ministers	Zaragoza, 20 May
Conference on <i>Public Employment Services in Europe: New Approaches to promote Workers Employability and Adaptability to new forms of Employment</i>	Zaragoza, 27-28 May
European Meeting on <i>People experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion</i>	Brussels, May
High Level Seminar on <i>Cross-sectoral approach on Youth Policy</i>	Madrid, 3-4 June
Presidency Conference on <i>Patients' Safety and Quality of Hospital Care</i>	3-4 June

#### **ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION**

High-level conference on <i>Urban development and integrated urban regeneration in Europe</i>	Madrid, 26-27 April
Informal meeting of ministers for regional policy	Malaga, 28-30 April
Conference on <i>Sustainable cities</i>	Dunkirk, 19-21 May
Conference on <i>Metropolitan areas</i>	Barcelona, 7-10 June
Informal meeting of ministers for urban development and housing	Toledo, 21-22 June
Brussels Economic Forum	Brussels, date to be confirmed

#### **CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL CHANGE**

Participation in <i>Maritime Day</i>	Vigo, 19-21 May
Participation in various "restructuring" forums organised by DG Employment	Brussels, date to be confirmed

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