



# The **EESC's** activities during the **Swedish Presidency**

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European Economic  
and Social Committee



# A word from the President

*Christa Schweng, EESC President*

As Sweden takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the ongoing crises of the war in Europe, the accelerating energy crisis and economic stagnation continue to be among the main political focus points. Our shared aims are to safeguard sustainable growth and competitiveness, while executing the green and digital transition and define our standing in the world and the well-being of our citizens.

The upcoming Presidency term will have to cope with the humanitarian and economic effects of Russia's aggression on Ukraine. We hope that there is a peaceful end in sight and we will continue to support the tireless work done by Europe's civil society groups and Ukrainian civil society organisations assisting the Ukrainian refugees. Europe's energy crisis is a consequence of this aggression and Sweden's Presidency will need to speed up the Green Transition at a liveable cost for all Europeans.

The exploratory opinions we will be drafting under the Swedish Presidency will be thorough and far reaching. The intersectional nature of these topics will cover climate, economy, youth, digitalisation, transport, skills and overall sustainability. We look forward to exploring these topics and to gain information and lived experience from organised civil society.

The EESC is delighted that 2023 will be the European Year of Skills, an extremely important issue area for both employers, workers, and civil society organisations. I hope that the Year of Skills will continue on from the Year of Youth, taking with it the lessons learnt and including young people at all stages. Upskilling, training, and empowering people, in particular women and young people, to gain employment opportunities will positively benefit both the labour market and our everyday lives.

We are committed to contributing to the Swedish Presidency and to working together to restore much needed balance and stability in Europe.

I wish Sweden the best of luck in their Presidency.  
United for the Future of Europe.

# The EESC's activities during the Swedish Presidency



## Economic and Monetary Union, Economic and Social Cohesion – ECO

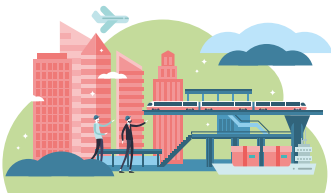
- Actively working on the involvement of Organised Civil Society in the implementation and the monitoring of National Recovery and Resilience Plans and the reshaping of the European Semester process in order to optimise the economic recovery following the crises of COVID and the war in Ukraine. This includes work on the Annual sustainable growth strategy and recommendations on the economic policy of the euro area, also building on national contributions
- Contributing to the Revision of the EU economic governance framework for a sustainable recovery and a just transition
- Contributing to the discussion on the possible introduction of a digital euro
- Contributing to the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 to ensure, that it and the recovery plan embedded in it can contribute to a sustainable and resilient economic recovery
- Actively working on proposals aiming to introduce a second set of genuine own resources
- Ensuring the stability, integration and resilience of European financial markets, and redirecting investment flows to support sustainable growth. This includes recommendations for the Review of the European Markets Infrastructure Regulation and on the Listing Act and following up on the proposals made for recapitalising EU businesses to support investment
- Contributing to the development of a Social taxonomy for sustainable investment. Feeding into the debate on the benefits and risks associated with crypto assets
- Following closely the implementation of the New territorial and urban agenda, examining the challenges in regions and territories with specific difficulties (sparsely populated areas, EU islands and mountain areas) and updating the recommendations on macroregional strategies
- Combating tax fraud, tax avoidance, money laundering and tax havens. Preparing policy proposals on the reallocation of taxing rights and making recommendations on the VAT in the Digital Age





## **Single Market, Production and Consumption – INT**

- Industrial policy and SMEs, with a focus on the resilient, sustainable and responsible supply chains in the EU and modern business responsibility as an avenue for increasing MSMEs ability for a successful transformation
- The social economy as an important pillar of the European economy
- Consumer policy and empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and better information and the revision of the alternative dispute resolution and online dispute resolution framework
- Digital Economy and Society, especially what is needed for the EU to further enhance its digital competitiveness and enable businesses to benefit from digitisation
- Circular Economy, with a focus on substantiating environmental claims using the Product/Organisation Environmental Footprint methods (green claims)
- The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Single Market, in particular how its functioning could be further improved and how to deepen it through digitalisation



## **Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society – TEN**

- Building an efficient, integrated and green European transport system
- Creating an energy union that enables EU consumers to access safe, clean and affordable energy
- Conveying grass root civil society proposals for an European strategy to fight energy poverty
- A comprehensive and consistent European political strategy to tackle energy poverty needs
- Supporting the renovation of the EU's building stock
- Protecting citizens through cybersecurity and resilience of critical entities
- A global and secure strategy for space communications



## **Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship – SOC**

- Economic and social recovery in the context of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and effective health policies
- Tackling the social impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine
- Addressing energy poverty
- Strengthening the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU
- Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Future of work, the platform economy and social dialogue
- Lifelong learning, employee training and skills
- Gender equality, disability rights, equal opportunities and youth
- Socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees



## **Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment – NAT**

- A sustainable agriculture and food strategy “From Farm to Fork”
- Sustainable rural/urban development
- Climate: Climate neutrality, European Climate Pact
- Youth engagement in sustainability and climate
- Implementation of the SDGs in the EU, with a particular focus on sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12)
- Circular economy (European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, ECESP)
- Biodiversity as a key element of the European Green Deal
- The economy of wellbeing



## **External Relations – REX**

- Support to Ukrainian civil society struck by the war and, intensified dialogue with civil society from Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. Specific support to independent civil society in Russia and Belarus
- Active contribution of civil society in the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans
- Strengthening the relations between EU and UK civil society organisations and promoting a joint reflection on future relationship
- Reflecting on the cooperation in the framework of the European Political Community and its impact on relations with the EU neighbours. Defining the role of civil society in this context
- Specific focus on energy policies and strategies in the Euro-Mediterranean region
- Cooperation with civil society from African, Caribbean and Pacific States focused on youth and circular economy
- Continuing efforts to engage with partners in China and Türkiye to pursue dialogue on economic, social, environmental and human rights issues
- Continued support for civil society involvement in the EU trade policy and for structured involvement of civil society in the WTO
- Continuous engagement in activities promoting democratic values, civic space and social and civil dialogue in EU partners' countries
- Encouraging more effective regional and bilateral cooperation and modernised partnerships with Latin America with institutional involvement of civil society



## **Consultative Commission on Industrial Change – CCMI**

- Analysing and mitigating the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on key EU industrial sectors
- Updated EU Industrial Strategy and transition pathways
- Enhancing the global competitiveness of EU industry
- A green and digital transition for European industry
- Post-COVID-19 recovery plan and the EU's industrial sectors
- EU cyber defence policy
- Structural shortages and strategic autonomy in the semiconductor ecosystem
- Circularity and Just Transition in the metal industry
- Development of post-Euro 6/VI emission standards for cars, vans, lorries and buses
- Water-related challenges and industry
- European critical raw materials act
- European defense investment programme
- EU space strategy for security and defence
- Textile aspects of the EU waste framework directive
- Construction sector (supplementary opinion of the CCMI based on Swedish Presidency request attributed to TEN section)



# A word from the Swedish Presidency

*Jessika Roswall, Minister for European Affairs*

It is an honour for the Swedish government and for me as Minister for EU Affairs to assume the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 January 2023.

We will take on this responsibility during a most challenging time for Europe; Russia's war against Ukraine, the energy crisis, and a weak economic outlook.

Our agenda will be dominated by matters linked to the consequences of the Russian illegal aggression. This only emphasises the importance of staying focused and united around the long-term issues relating to the economic basis of our Union. Our ability to foster sustainable growth and competitiveness will define our standing in the world and the well-being of our citizens. This is obviously closely linked to how successfully we can execute the green and digital transition.

In the interest of the Council, the Member States, and the Union as a whole, we will do our utmost to tackle these challenges, while at the same time progressing on important legislative initiatives.

It is an understatement to say that there are many important matters on the European agenda. Enhancing our common European security, accelerating the green transition, and boosting the Union's global competitiveness are key tasks, as is upholding the fundamental values upon which our Union is built.

The Swedish Presidency stands ready to address these challenges – for a better and stronger Europe.



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## EESC opinions requested by the Swedish Presidency

1. Further enhancing the EU's digital competitiveness
2. The Single Market at 30 – how to further improve the functioning of the Single Market
3. Competence and skill development in a context of the green and digital transition
4. The advantages of modern industrial wooden construction
5. The transition to a long-term sustainable transport system
6. Young people's role in the green transition





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