



European Economic and Social Committee

European Economic and Social Committee
Comité économique et social européen
Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité

www.eesc.europa.eu





European Economic and Social Committee

What is the EESC?

A consultative body that represents **Civil Society**



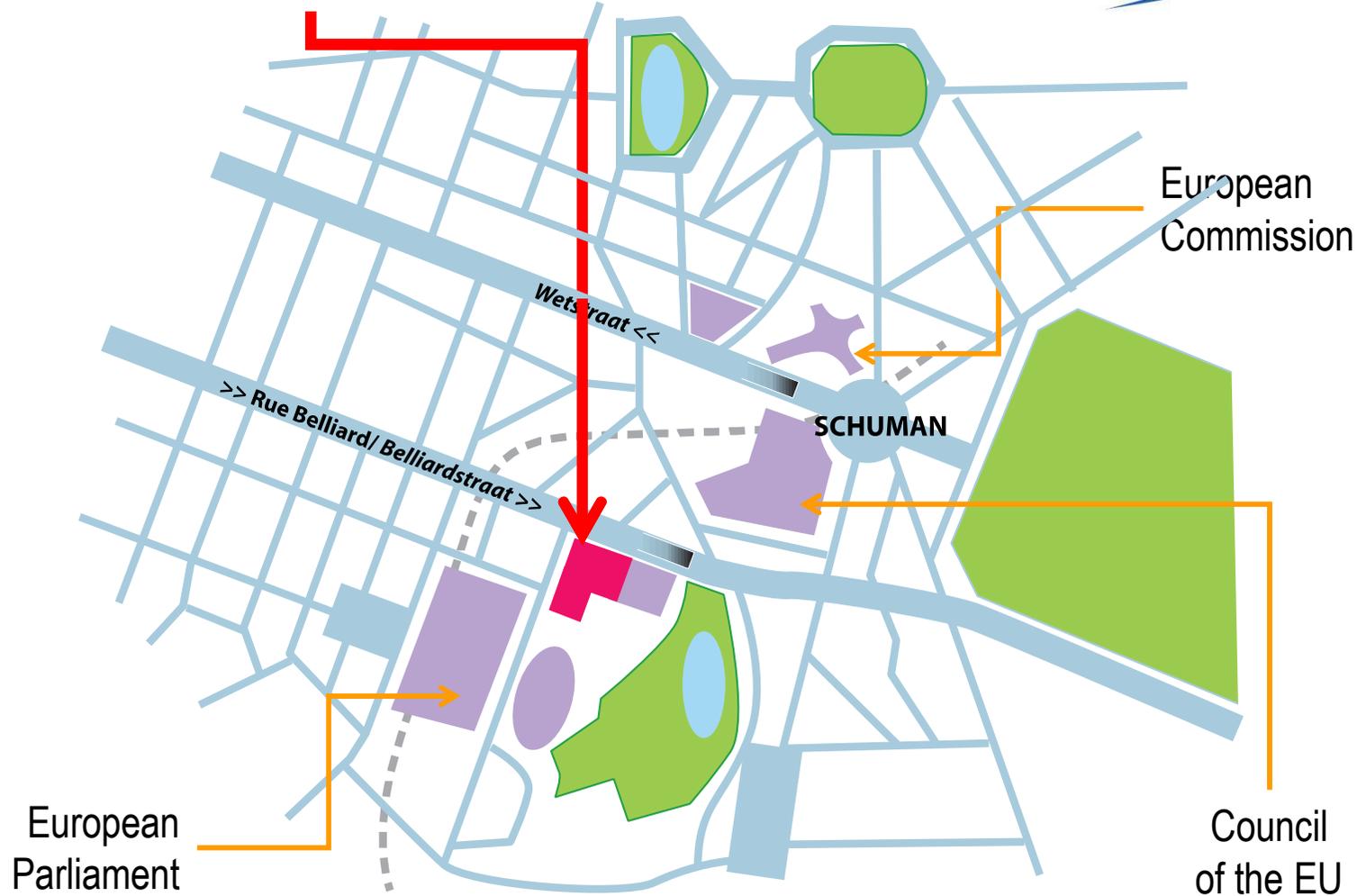
“The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be **assisted by an Economic and Social Committee** and a Committee of the Regions acting in **an advisory capacity**.”

Treaty on European Union, Art. 13



European Economic and Social Committee

Where is the EESC located?





European Economic and Social Committee

Mission statement

Committed to the European project, the EESC helps strengthen the European Union's democratic legitimacy and effectiveness by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level.

It has three main tasks, which are to:

- ensure that **EU policies** reflect the true economic, social and civic picture,
- build a more **participatory EU**, closer to its citizens, and
- promote **EU values** and civil society organisations globally



More than half a century of experience

- **1957** The EESC is established by the **Rome Treaties**
- **1986** The **Single European Act** further develops the EESC's role
- **1989** The EESC issues the opinion that inspired the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights
- **1992** The **Maastricht Treaty** broadens the scope of EESC consultations
- **1997** The **Amsterdam Treaty** grants the EESC the right to be consulted by the European Parliament
- **2001** The **Nice Treaty** further extends the range of policy areas on which the EESC must be consulted
- **2007** By recognising participatory democracy alongside representative democracy, the **Lisbon Treaty** strengthens the EESC's role as intermediary between organised civil society and EU decision-makers.





European Economic and Social Committee

What does Civil Society mean?

People “on the ground” - those most directly affected by EU legislation!

That is, representatives of organisations of

- **employers**
- **workers**
- **various interests** (*including farmers, the professions, consumers, NGOs...*)

Those who are committed to defending their interests (trade unions, employers, consumers ...) **or convictions** (human rights, children's rights, environment, poverty, the fight against racism and discrimination...)



European Economic and Social Committee

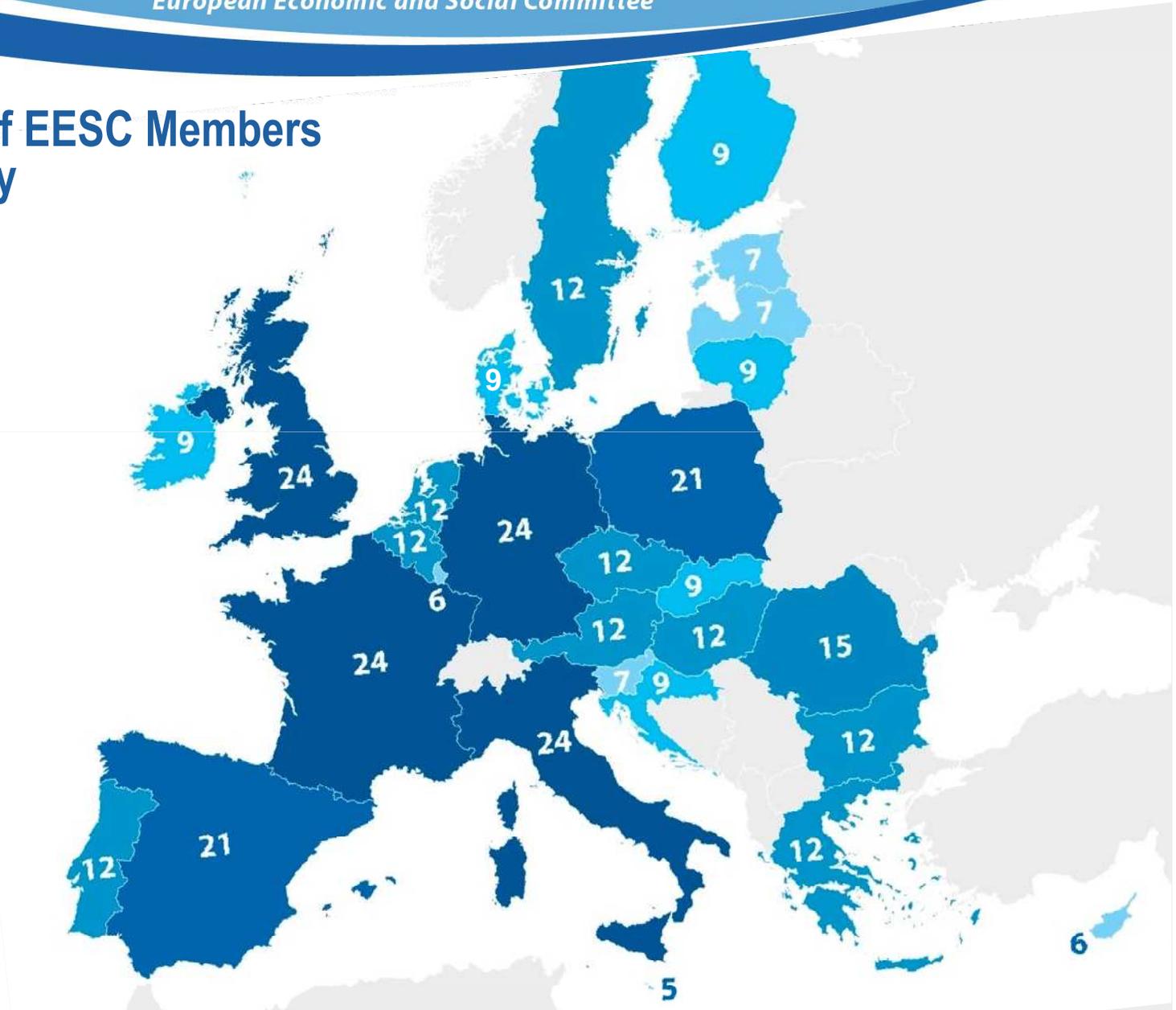
What is the structure of the EESC?

- It is an assembly of **353 members** from the **28 Member States** of the EU.
- Members are appointed for **a renewable five-year term by the Council** on a proposal by Member States, but they work independently for the EESC in the interest of all EU citizens.
- **Members are not paid**, although their travel and accommodation costs are met.
- **Members are not based full-time in Brussels**: most continue to do their own jobs in their home countries, which means they can stay in touch with people “back home”.



European Economic and Social Committee

Number of EESC Members by country





European Economic and Social Committee

President



Henri MALOSSE
Group 1



Vice-Presidents



Hans –Joachim WILMS
Group 2



Jane MORRICE
Group 3





European Economic and Social Committee

An assembly divided into 3 GROUPS



Group I – Employers

- Representatives of business associations working in industry, commerce, services and agriculture
- President: **Jacek Krawczyk** (Poland)



Group II – Workers

- Representatives of national trade unions, confederations and sectoral federations
- President: **George Dassis** (Greece)



Group III – Various Interests

- Other representatives of and stakeholders in civil society, particularly in the economic, civic, professional and cultural spheres
- President: **Luca Jahier** (Italy)



European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC's decision-making bodies



The Presidency

Elected for a two-and-a-half-year term



The Bureau

Elected for a two-and-a-half-year term



The Plenary Assembly

Nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the EU for a renewable five-year term



European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC's working bodies: **6 sections**



ECO

Economic and Monetary Union and
Economic and Social Cohesion



Joost Van Iersel

(Group 1)



INT

Single Market, Production
and Consumption



Martin Siecker

(Group 2)



TEN

Transport, Energy, Infrastructure
and the Information Society



Stéphane Buffetaut

(Group 1)



REX

External Relations



**Jose Maria Zufiaur
Narvaiza**

(Group 2)



NAT

Agriculture, Rural Development
and the Environment



Dilyana Slavova

(Group 3)



SOC

Employment, Social Affairs
and Citizenship



Maureen O'Neill

(Group 3)



European Economic and Social Committee

The EESC's other working bodies

CCMI	The Consultative Commission on Industrial Change
Steering Committee	Europe 2020
SMO	The Single Market Observatory
SDO	The Sustainable Development Observatory
LMO	The Labour Market Observatory



European Economic and Social Committee

Working methods

- The EESC works in all **24 official languages** of the EU, so that each member is able to speak and draft texts in his/her mother tongue
- To issue opinions (mandatory, own-initiative or exploratory opinions), the sections usually set up “**study groups**”, each with a **rapporteur**
- There is a continual quest for a “**dynamic compromise**”
- **Constructive debate** takes place, on the basis of real expertise
- **A vote** is taken in the **section**, and then in the **plenary session**
- The **final opinion is sent to the European institutions** and published in the Official Journal of the EU



European Economic and Social Committee

How we work: opinions





Why do we need the EESC?

- The EESC is the only way for Europe's interest groups to have a formal and **institutionalised say on draft EU legislation**
- Democracy cannot exist without the participation of civil society
- All **topics affecting people's daily lives** are covered (employment, health, consumer rights, farming, the fight against organised crime etc.)

So is the EESC a kind of lobby group, then?

No, not at all

The Committee is the only institutional meeting-place and forum for dialogue at European level that enables a consensus to be reached between diverse interests.

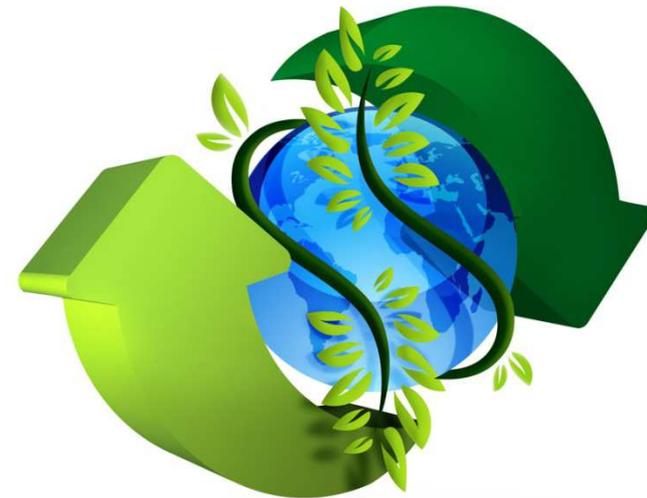
Whereas, lobbies are obviously there to tell just one side of the story.



European Economic and Social Committee

Our vision: European values

- freedom, democracy and equality
- global solidarity, social justice
- environmental responsibility





European Economic and Social Committee

Pattern of work

- **9 plenary sessions per year**
- Each of the **6 sections** generally meets **once a month**
- Each **study group** meets **between one and three times**
- The members and the various working bodies are assisted by a **secretariat-general**

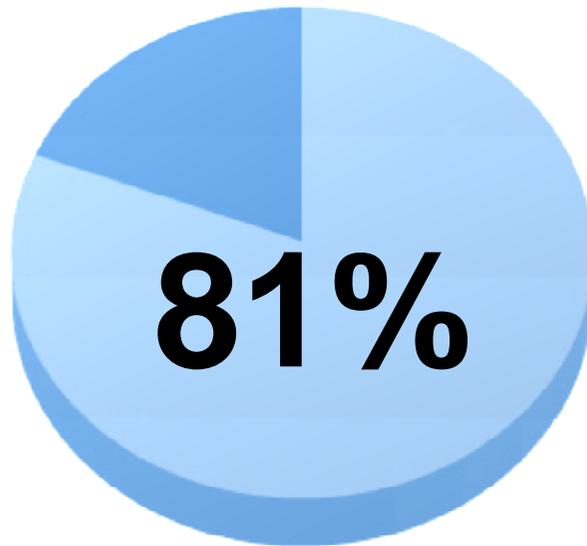




European Economic and Social Committee

Does the EESC influence EU law?

Yes. The *European Commission* acts on **4 out of 5** EESC opinions



Former EU Commission President **Barroso** and EESC President **Malosse**



European Economic and Social Committee

Challenges for the future

- To optimise the Committee's role as a consultative body for the European Parliament, Council and European Commission by **stepping up cooperation**
- To improve the EESC's **representativeness and credibility** as the institutional representative of civil society
- To raise the EESC's profile in the **debate on the future of Europe**



European Economic and Social Committee

Examples of key policy issues covered

- Employment for young people
- Climate change
- Renewable energy
- Sustainable development
- Demographic change
- Active ageing
- Immigration and integration
- Cost of non-Europe
- Research and innovation
- Education
- SMEs
- Disability



European Economic and Social Committee

Follow us!
It's about Europe, it's about YOU!
www.eesc.europa.eu



facebook

EESC - European Economic and Social Committee



@EU_EESC



EurEcoSocCommittee