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Brussels, 21 June 2024

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| **588th PLENARY SESSION**  **30 and 31 May 2024**  **SUMMARY OF ADOPTED OPINIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND INFORMATION / EVALUATION REPORTS** |
| This document is available in the official languages on the EESC website at:  <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/plenary-session-summaries>  The opinions listed can be consulted online using the EESC search engine:  <https://dmsearch.eesc.europa.eu/search/opinion> |

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

1. [***The role of cohesion policy in upcoming rounds of EU enlargement***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/role-cohesion-policy-upcoming-rounds-eu-enlargement)

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| **Rapporteur** | Maria del Carmen BARRERA CHAMORRO (Workers' Group - ES) |
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| **References** | Exploratory opinion at the request of the European Commission  EESC-2024-00535-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* stresses that pre-accession aid policy is an indispensable tool of enlargement policy whose influence can be boosted to promote peace and prosperity across the European continent, particularly in regions where peace and stability have been recently challenged;
* notes that to prepare candidate states to fully implement the cohesion policy instruments in the future pre-accession aid policy should be better tailored to the strengths, challenges, and needs of the respective regions, as well as the bordering regions of EU Member States;
* recommends that pre-accession aid policy in candidate states should invest more systematically in human capital development, education and social integration to prevent and ease social inequalities. Promoting links with CSOs in improving pre-accession aid policy planning are essential;
* notes that with the future cohesion policy, the protection of vulnerable groups, which face additional and formidable obstacles to their economic and social development and can face additional challenges in the future accession process should be prioritised;
* stresses that stronger partnerships with CSOs in candidate states are not only invaluable for the promotion of enlargement objectives; they are also in line with effective and inclusive development strategies by using the established principles of strong partnership and shared management;
* stresses that the role of cohesion policy has to go far beyond core investment. It must focus on institution and capacity building, including twinning programmes and support for civil society and social partners;
* underlines the fact that enlargement waves have also had an impact on the current Member States and their regions, as the new Member States join the single market and affect the international value chain and labour migration in the EU. Additional funds are therefore needed to invest in the regions bordering the candidate countries, as well as in the regions of the current Member States severely affected by changes in the EU and global value chains as a result of enlargement;
* considers that the EC should orient its reforms of future cohesion policy, in parallel to the enlargement process, to boost the effectiveness of current policies, based on increased specialisation and diversification, linked to greater flexibility and financial specialisation. No financial assistance can succeed in unleashing economic prosperity without parallel efforts in institution building, governance reform and civil society engagement;
* stresses the need for urgent action to stem the tide of emigration from the EU candidate countries, which threatens to ruin the potential for economic and social development, through various policy measures, including investment in human capital;
* considers it essential to improve the situation of young people in the candidate countries. Efforts are needed to improve the skills and employment of young people and to increase both educational and quality employment opportunities for young people, in parallel with housing solutions. Dialogue and participation of young people in youth guarantee initiatives should also be encouraged;
* recommends increasing efforts to care for the most vulnerable people and vulnerable groups in the candidate countries, incorporating them not only into protection systems but also taking them into account in the decision-making process, as the best way of achieving the first basic principle of the Cohesion Policy of “Leaving no one behind”.

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1. [***Ninth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/ninth-report-economic-social-and-territorial-cohesion)

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| **Rapporteur** | Matteo Carlo BORSANI (Employers' Group - IT) |
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| **References** | COM(2024) 149 final  EESC-2024-00987-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* welcomes the presentation of the 9th Cohesion Report and regards the description of its results as comprehensive, as well as a useful starting point to take stock of the lessons learned;
* recommends focusing investments and policies on boosting the manufacturing base in order to enhance upward territorial cohesion, stressing that a positive correlation between productivity growth and an increase in GDP per head has proved to be the only similarity between growth in all types of regions;
* emphasises the importance of competitiveness in boosting economic cohesion and of productive investments in stimulating competitiveness and economic growth, which in turn has a positive spill-over effect on territorial and social cohesion. It also underlines the importance of expanding access to cohesion policy funds for productive investments to big companies which are part of the SME ecosystem, under certain conditions related to its cascading effect over territory and society. Economic cohesion results should not be measured only in terms of amount of economic investments in a certain area, but also in terms of territorial and social results;
* stresses the importance of a functioning and inclusive labour market in increasing social cohesion, through measures aimed at empowering EU citizens and workers with the right set of skills to enter and move within the labour market. In this context, recommends pairing policies to promote employment with policies to stimulate employability, including by targeting the share of society which risks being left behind and promoting the inclusion of people who are currently not part of the labour market;
* recommends promoting strategic investments in local and regional administration, in order to strengthen the system that plays a central role in implementing programmes. In fact, social, economic and territorial cohesion cannot be achieved without firstly achieving cohesion in public administrations’ capacity;
* recommends ensuring the involvement of regional and local authorities, fulfilling the partnership principle and involving social partners and civil society organisations during any reflection on the future of the cohesion policy;
* calls for the co-legislators to make the overall MFF budget more ambitious and to ensure adequate funding for the cohesion policy, including in view of the future need for EU investment in defence and of a 27+ European Union;
* in this context, recommends considering future enlargements envisaged by the EU, which will require an effective and well-functioning cohesion policy, in order to guarantee the smooth integration of future Member States, without compromising investments in the current developing regions;
* finally, recommends using automatic and easy-to-implement investment tools for the transition towards a smarter and greener Europe. The challenges posed by the fair green and digital transitions and their ambitious targets require speed and readiness.

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# [**EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CITIZENSHIP**](#_Toc159831769)

1. [***Vaccine preventable cancers***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/vaccine-preventable-cancers)

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| **Rapporteur**  **Co-rapporteur** | Milena ANGELOVA (Employers' Group - BG)  Sára FELSZEGHI (Workers' Group - HU) |
| **References** | COM(2024) 45 final |
| EESC-2024-00425-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* encourages sharing of experience, good practices and intensive cooperation between Member States;
* recommends to enhance both demand and supply of vaccination and highlights the need for proper information, education and communication and underlines the role of the school healthcare system and parents in this endeavour. Cancer prevention should become a priority at the political level and accompanied by the necessary financial, material and human resources;
* calls for strong efforts to fight misinformation and disinformation by acquiring science-based evidence, as well as by spreading fact-based information through different channels including social media;
* believes that general practitioners, family doctors, school physicians and also civil society organisations can play an important role in providing proper information, decreasing fears and scepticism and guiding people to take vaccinations. To ensure that messages are attractive for younger people, the EESC advocates enhancing communication efforts through youth-led organisations;
* emphasises the need for gender equality in cancer prevention measures and calls for providing HPV vaccination to all girls and boys of a certain age, to intensify communication on the availability of HPV vaccination for boys and to gather and publish information on the vaccination rates of both boys and girls in various Member States;
* highlights the importance of easy access to vaccination in terms of geographic location, as well as the need for focused action to reach people from various disadvantaged groups and people with specific risks.

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1. [***Revision of the European Works Council Directive***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/revision-de-la-directive-relative-au-comite-dentreprise-europeen)

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| **Rapporteur:** | Sophia REISECKER (Workers' Group - AT) |
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| **Reference:** | COM(2024) 14 final |
| EESC-2024-00543-00-00-AC |

**Key points:**

The EESC:

* welcomes the legislative steps taken by the European Commission to revise Directive 2009/38/EC with regard to minimum standards for setting up European Works Councils (EWCs) and ensuring their effective operation;
* recognises the aim to increase the effectiveness and implementation of EWC rights to provide legal certainty by clarifying key concepts of the EWC Directive. This especially concerns the definition of transnationality, appropriate resources available to EWCs, access to justice and increasing the Member States’ commitment to provide for effective and sufficiently dissuasive sanctions for infringements of EWC rights;
* is pleased by the Commission’s aims to revise the standard for a more efficient and meaningful information and consultation process by proposing additions to the subsidiary requirements, to increase the frequency of regular EWC meetings and to introduce a reasoned response by management to the EWC opinions. It also recognises the strengthening of trade union representatives’ role as assisting EWC experts;
* supports important amendments regarding the ability of EWCs and their members to fulfil their duties. This concerns in particular resources to be provided by management, the details of which have to be jointly determined in the relevant EWC agreement in connection to training, experts and legal representation and the intended clarifications on confidentiality;
* calls on the legislative institutions to quickly proceed with revising the EWC Directive in line with the Commission’s proposal, also taking into account the recommendations proposed in this opinion;
* highlights the need to guarantee proper transposition and implementation of the revised Directive with effective monitoring and implementation tools to be used by the Commission in this process.

**Due to divergent views raised by the employers' organisations, members of the EESC Employers' Group tabled a counter-opinion. More specifically, they expressed concerns that the revision of the Directive could complicate the functioning of EWCs and risk transforming them from effective channels for company-level information and consultation into sources of disputes and legal uncertainty. The EESC Employers' Group believes this could potentially undermine the essential cooperation and trust in the workplace. The counter-opinion was rejected by the EESC (104 votes in favour/125 against/11 abstentions) but since it received more than a quarter of the votes cast, in line with the EESC Rules of Procedure, it is appended to the opinion.**

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1. [***No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/un-lieu-ou-il-est-exclu-de-hair-une-europe-unie-contre-la-haine)

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| **Rapporteur** | Cristian PÎRVULESCU (Civil Society Organisations' Group - RO) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Milena ANGELOVA (Employers' Group - BG) |
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| **References** | JOIN(2023) 51 final  EESC-2024-00795-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* welcomes the Communication while stressing the need for a more comprehensive partnership with CSOs. It calls for awareness-raising campaigns and efforts to combat the ‘ecosystems’ of hatred off- and online and recalls the responsibility of politicians to avoid language promoting hated;
* calls on the EU to adopt a comprehensive approach and fight hate based on any protected human characteristics, to implement effectively existing strategies and initiatives promoting equality and non-discrimination, and to primarily use the same approach to fighting all types of hate. It calls on the Member States to prosecute hate-based crimes, encourage reporting, and train law enforcement agencies to handle such cases properly, with due respect for the victims;
* regrets that the anti-hate drive on online platforms is underdeveloped in scale and impact. The role and expertise of the flaggers should be expanded to consistently cover all types of online hate biases. Media and digital literacy should be improved to ensure more effective reporting;
* believes that the work of the High-Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime should be better operationalised, training and capacity-building for civil society be enhanced, and reporting be made more effective. Reporting and benchmarking should be used to identify progress. Reporting of hate crimes should be standardised and institutionalised at EU level. Reporting mechanisms must be available and accessible, the Commission is encouraged to create an online platform for swift reporting by CSOs and human rights defenders of incidents;
* underlines that the Commission should organise a review of the work of CSOs, as well as trusted flaggers, and propose measures to increase their effectiveness and that work is scaled to the current challenges. The EU should insist that large online platforms prevent their algorithms from amplifying hate, and should use funds from the CERV programme and Horizon Europe to identify and combat ecosystems of hatred online, allowing existing educational and research capacities to contribute to this objective, and Erasmus+ citizenship education could also contribute to towards this aim.

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# **AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

* [***EU climate target for 2040***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-climate-target-2040)

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| **Rapporteur** | Teppo SÄKKINEN(Employers' Group - FI) |
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| **References** | COM(2024) 63 final |
| EESC-2024-00418-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* **supports the** **recommended target of 90% by 2040**, as it aligns with the science on Europe’s fair share of the 1.5 degree goal. The EESC emphasises that the **target is demanding** and can only be achieved if enabling policies are in place to ensure the **competitiveness of European industries** and a **just transition** and through utilising all zero and low carbon technologies cost-effectively;
* **emphasises actual emissions reductions** **through phasing out fossil fuels**. While carbon removals play an increasing role in achieving EU climate targets, over-reliance on sinks entails uncertainties and risks of lock-in to fossil dependency or loss of sinks due to forest fires, pests and other hazards;
* calls for the Commission to make a scientific and economic assessment on the **balance between reductions and removals**;
* underlines focusing on the implementation of the Fit for 55 legislation and supporting European businesses and households in adapting to the new regulatory environment;
* notes that the climate targets require an **unprecedented level of investment into decarbonisation**;
* calls for the Commission to track and set goals for the growth of exports of European cleantech products and services;
* calls for **power generation** in the EU to become **carbon free by 2040**, closely followed by heating and cooling. Availability of clean and affordable energy and a fit for future energy infrastructure is the foundation for decarbonisation of other sectors, such as industry, buildings and transport;
* proposes an indicative **emissions reduction target** to be established **for the agri-food sector** through close dialogue with farmers and other stakeholders, based on science, ensuring European food security and taking into account different natural conditions in the EU;
* underlines the importance of broad stakeholder dialogue, including with social partners and civil society, and citizen engagement in establishing the 2040 target and developing the accompanying policies;
* highlights the possibility of increased emissions reductions and lower material and energy demand through **empowering consumers for sustainable lifestyle choices**;
* calls for the Commission to **expand the competitiveness check** in relation to other major economies, including their climate, energy and industrial policies and economic indicators, to provide proposals on how to strengthen Europe’s global competitiveness and industrial base and safeguard our model of open market economy with high environmental and social standards.

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1. [***Revision of the animal welfare legislation***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/revision-animal-welfare-legislation)

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| **Rapporteur** | Jaume BERNIS CASTELLS (Civil Society Organisations’ Group - ES) |
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| **References** | COM(2023) 770 final  EESC-2023-05464-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* suggests the Commission to take into account the practical knowledge of farmers, transporters and veterinarians, to implement and harmonise the regulations;
* understands that **legislation unable to adapt** to the varied circumstances in the 27 Member States **will open the door to asymmetrical situations**;
* calls on the Commission to **ensure** that the **implementation costs** of this regulation are **not borne by stakeholders** in the sector;
* emphasises that the **provisions** laid down in the proposal for a regulation **require operators to work night shifts** (especially farmers, drivers and veterinarians);
* calls on the Commission to **consider the impact this proposal will have on supply chains** that have been built and distributed over the years on the basis of current time constraints;
* warns of the consequences of limiting the transport of animals for slaughter to short journeys of less than nine hours;
* considers that new **proposed technical standards** on the fitness for transport of terrestrial animals **could lead to the closure of many livestock farms**;
* believes that the **ban on transporting young animals** (such as calves, lambs, kids, piglets and foals, which have not been weaned) **on long road journeys will have a significant impact on imports of animal breeds** from other EU Member States;
* calls on the Commission to **consider the climate-related characteristics** of each Member State in relation to Article 31 of the proposal;
* maintains that it is essential to **promote short supply chains** as an effective solution for reducing the need for long journeys by shortening the distance between the places the animals are reared, fattened, slaughtered and consumed;
* supports the initiatives activating sanitary, economic and legal levers to **preserve local slaughterhouses and encourage on-farm slaughtering** where appropriate to the size of the farm and the local context.

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# **TRANSPORT, ENERGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

1. [***Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan:*** ***Driving forces for the security of medical radioisotopes supply***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/plan-europeen-pour-vaincre-le-cancer-vers-un-approvisionnement-sur-en-radio-isotopes-usage-medical)

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| **Rapporteur** | Alena MASTANTUONO (Employers' Group - CZ) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Philippe CHARRY (Workers' Group - FR) |
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| **References** | Own-initiative opinion  EESC-2024-00265-00-00-AC |
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**Key points**

The EESC:

* highlights that nuclear medicine saves millions of lives and represents a source of great hope for the fight against cancer. The Committee stresses the need to address patients’ needs in Europe and ensure that all of them have equal access to cancer treatment;
* In Europe, ten million diagnosis and therapy procedures per year are based on radiopharmaceuticals. Priority should be given to radionuclide targeted therapies, which are precise and often less harmful than other treatments;
* calls for production incentives ensuring better strategic autonomy in the supply of radioisotopes. Europe is the world leader in the supply of radioisotopes for medicine. At the same time, it has critical dependencies on third countries for key source materials and specific processing operations. Therefore, the Committee calls on the Critical Medicines Alliance to carefully monitor the supply of radioisotopes in Europe and support bolstering industrial competitiveness in this sector;
* requests that due care to be taken to ensure that staff safety and security measures are respected throughout the supply chain and calls for urgent investment in the planning, education and training of the people needed in this sector and in staff mobility.

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# **CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL CHANGE**

* [***European defence industry programme***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-defence-industry-programme)

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| **Rapporteur** | Tomasz Andrzej WRÓBLEWSKI(Employers' Group - PL) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Franck UHLIG(Cat. 2 - FR) |
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| **References** | COM(2024) 150 final |
| EESC-2024-00813-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* recommends that the European Commission **communicate extensively with European citizens to broadly convey the challenges of joint defence financing** in the current geopolitical context, and with a view to building common security, while continuing to base European integration on a project of peace and solidarity;
* asks for an **increase to the current limited funding (EUR 1.5 billion)** in the medium term;
* stresses that the EDIP must, in addition to the necessary response to Ukraine’s urgent needs, lead to a **structural evolution of the European approach to defence** and the associated European Defence Industrial and Technological Base (EDTIB);
* recommends that the European Parliament, the Member States, the public and private financial sectors and the European Commission outline a **long-term plan for increased arms spending and procurement**, which will facilitate private sector long-term investment and support production plans for military equipment by the EDTIB, and provide support to the DTIB for Ukraine;
* recommends that the European Commission **clarify the origin and use of funds earmarked for the EDIP**;
* recommends that **EDTIB companies strengthen cooperation, especially with SMEs and across borders**;
* highlights the importance of **industrial cooperation with Ukraine** within the framework of the EDIP;
* suggests further promoting **synergies between defence and civilian industries**, including SMEs and start-ups;
* recommends **integrating the percentage of cooperative and intra-European purchasing targets** expressed in the ‘EDIS’ communication, in the EDIP regulatory document.

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* [**Drone industry: a case study for strategic autonomy**](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/drone-manufacturing-industry-case-study-assess-outcome-strategic-sector-different-policies-place-enhance-european)

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| **Rapporteur** | Panagiotis GKOFAS (Civil Society Organisations' Group - EL) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Patrice François CHAZERAND (Cat. 1 - FR) |
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| **References** | Own-initiative opinion  EESC-2024-00046-00-00-AC |
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**Key points**

The EESC:

* believes that the connection of the **European Drone Strategy** with the **European Defence Industrial Strategy** and the integration of the **European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB)** to support **domestic production of high quality/capacity drones** by way of a **steady flow of procurement contracts** is essential for Europe’s critical independence;
* continues to advocate **improved collaboration and innovation** and leveraging legislation like the AI Act and Chips Act to **enhance strategic autonomy** and bolster national security and economic growth;
* emphasises that the need for **coherence between military and civilian R&D** will only grow as drones will use more automation, machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI);
* believes that a **strategic Drone Technology Roadmap for Europe** is essential for critical drone technologies and dual-use drone systems likely to provide a structured approach to advancing drone technology;
* emphasises that thorough consideration should be given to **financially supporting potential investments in drone production and in integrating supply and value chains**;
* stresses that the EU should engage more actively at the global level, especially with regards to certification procedures;
* notes that **societal acceptance** of innovative air mobility operations is of the essence: EU support can bolster the overall aviation ecosystem, contributing to its growth and sustainability;
* stresses that the EU should also be prepared to create a consolidated **strategy on developing a common counter-drone umbrella** to face multiple risks related to hybrid threats, terrorist actions, aggression from other states, and even abuse at civilian level.

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* [***Communication on industrial carbon management***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/communication-sur-la-gestion-industrielle-du-carbone)

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| **Rapporteur** | Gonçalo LOBO XAVIER (Employers' Group - PT) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Jean-Michel POURTEAU (Cat. 2 - FR) |
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| **References** | COM(2024) 62 final |
| EESC-2024-00878-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* believes that **the Industrial Carbon Management Strategy** **is very welcomed and balanced,** covering elements crucial for **deploying Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) at industrial scale in the EU**;
* recognises that in order to build **a single market in carbon**, **establishing storage and transport infrastructure (including cross-border)** together with **market rules** is necessary;
* draws attention to the need to **tailor carbon management strategies to specific industrial sectors**;
* maintains that it is fundamental **to identify the barriers undermining effective implementation of existing carbon management practices**, in order to implement changes and define strategies;
* believes that the EU needs an **industrial strategy for carbon, boosting growth in a sustainable manner,** that not only **delivers the Green Deal** but also **ensures quality jobs and a just transition for workers,** while identifying **labour and skills shortages mitigated by reskilling and upskilling**;
* recommends **a clear investment plan** **for developing CCS/CCU technologies**, while **public funding should have a social conditionality mechanism geared to creating and maintaining quality jobs**;
* believes that carbon reduction projects should involve in a balanced way both, **carbon removal and carbon avoidance** however, **carbon avoidance is currently insufficiently supported**;
* recommends **establishing a new, separate, well-designed, high-integrity and robust credit scheme for carbon avoidance**, offering incentives to decarbonise;
* claims that **EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) allowances should not be used as ‘credits’**, as this could undermine the current market-based nature of the EU’s carbon trading system.

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1. [***European defence industrial strategy***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-defence-industrial-strategy)

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| **Rapporteur** | Maurizio MENSI (Civil Society Organisations' Group - IT) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | Jan PIE (Cat. 1 - SE) |
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| **References** | JOIN(2024) 10 final  EESC-2024-00782-00-00-AC |

**Key points**

The EESC:

* welcomes the European Defence Industrial Strategy as an important step towards strengthening Europe’s defence readiness and thus its capacity to protect its citizens, its territory, and its core values and way of life;
* welcomes the shift in approach from emergency measures to a longer-term, structural response. In particular, it welcomes the focus on the need to increase European sourcing for European needs;
* highlights the importance of leveraging partnerships with friendly countries with common values to meet the strategy’s objectives;
* regrets that the strategy does not address public perception since this is a key factor in democratic societies;
* notes that the key instrument for the strategy's implementation (EDIP) is unlikely to be operational before late 2025. Therefore, the strategy must be complemented by other, short-term measures aimed at addressing immediate needs.
* calls on Member States to accept the Commission’s invitation to look for in the short-term options for boosting, through available instruments, large-scale joint defence procurements, the large-scale ramp-up of the EDTIB, and the launch of defence flagship projects.
* is of the view that ensuring the defence industry’s access to skills, technology and research, is crucial from both an industrial and a strategic perspective;
* underscores that the success of the strategy will depend primarily on Member States’ full engagement and recognition of the added value of a European approach.

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1. [***Industrial and technological approaches and best practices supporting a water resilient society***](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/industrial-and-technological-approaches-and-best-practices-supporting-water-resilient-society)

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| **Rapporteur** | Florian MARIN (Workers' Group - RO) |
| **Co-rapporteur** | John BRYAN (Cat. 3 - IE) |
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| **References** | Exploratory opinion at the request of the European Commission  EESC-2024-00209-00-00-AC |
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**Key points**

The EESC:

* calls for a **stand-alone strategy** – an EU Blue Deal - and for an action plan **on water to ensure water resilience, security and sustainability, complementing the EU Green Deal**;
* urges the EU to **integrate water in a revised industrial strategic framework** and in the transition pathways with a sectoral approach;
* notes that this revision should explore the idea of establishing a **new industrial deal to offer European industry a consolidated strategy** that responds to the multiple challenges it faces (on water, energy, critical raw materials, digitalisation and strategic autonomy) within four years;
* stresses that industrial and technological approaches supporting a water-smart society must be firmly structured around **a comprehensive sustainable water management policy for industry** based on reducing, reusing and recycling water, decreasing pollution and including the incremental introduction and use of water-efficient technologies, whilst ensuring a just transition that **safeguards industrial competitiveness**;
* underlines the need for a **European water data management ecosystem**, as well as the need to measure water consumption throughout production processes and minimise the use of drinking water for industrial purposes;
* highlights the need to **ensure water access for the most critical industries during crisis** situations;
* calls for a **transitional pathway to develop the clean and water-efficient tech sector**, including a human dimension roadmap to ensure the availability of the required skills, quality jobs and decent working conditions;
* proposes measures supporting the **implementation of the EU Blue Deal transition fund** in the industrial field;
* supports the creation of the **water knowledge and innovation community (KIC)** by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

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