



2025 WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' GROUP

(Subject to review according to developments during the year)



**European Economic
and Social Committee**

Civil Society Organisations' Group

INTRODUCTION

2025 will constitute a very **particular year** for the Civil Society Organisations' Group due to the **five-year renewal** of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the **transition to a new Group President**, both occurring in October 2025. A third element of specificity will be the **delayed adoption of the work programme of the new European Commission (EC)**. Together, these three factors will directly affect the **scope, timing and individual activities of the Group** during the course of the year.

PRIORITIES OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' GROUP

In 2025, the Civil Society Organisations' Group will maintain as its **overriding priority** the **fight against poverty**, which constitutes the first objective of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in combatting poverty**. In addition, in the current challenging times, the **defence of democracy**, fundamental rights and the rule of law are of utmost importance to the Group. Combatting poverty can only be achieved with a **strong, independent, inclusive and diverse civil society**, which defends civic space and media freedom, strengthens civil dialogue and promotes civil preparedness. In this context, the Group will prioritise giving a voice to the **most vulnerable**, pursuing **just transitions**, **equitable and inclusive societies**.



In parallel, the political changes within the Committee and the Group in 2025, will necessitate a significant amount of human and financial resources to be dedicated to the complex process of **preparing for and managing the five-year renewal of the EESC** and the **transition to a new Group President**. As will be outlined below, **half of the extraordinary meetings** of the Civil Society Organisations' Group in 2025 will deal solely with the **renewal** and institutional obligations therein. Moreover, it will be necessary to organise **all thematic events** of the Group **before the summer of 2025**, in order to concentrate the third quarter of the year on **welcoming and informing the new** and **returning Members**, as well as organising their **appointments to EESC bodies**.



Conference organised by the Civil Society Organisations' Group during the EESC term 2020-2025 in Paris, France

METHODOLOGY

As regards the **policy work** of the Civil Society Organisations' Group, in 2025 the Group will continue to pursue a **coherent, structured and focussed approach**, weaving together all of the **policy instruments** at its disposal and building on the competences of its Members. A strong emphasis will be placed on **continuity**, with the **topics** and **activities** building on previous **work by the Group**.

In anticipation of the **forthcoming new mandate of the Committee**, the Group will:

- **Firstly**, concentrate on preparing for and ensuring an efficient and smooth renewal of the Civil Society Organisations Group, in particular with regard to the election of candidates to the Presidencies of various EESC bodies;
- **Secondly**, welcome and facilitate the integration of new Members into the recomposed Group;
- **Thirdly**, promote the interests of the Group in EESC bodies responsible for political and policy decisions.



ACTIVITIES (to be regularly reviewed during 2025)

Internal Group governance

- **Adopting** the **work programme** of the Group for 2025 and **approving** the **review** of the **Groups' activities** in **2024**, during the extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of the Group, 13 January.

Five-year renewal of the EESC

- **Electing** the candidates for the Presidents of the **Civil Society Organisations' Group, ECO Section, NAT Section** and **CCMI**, as well as the Group's **Quaestor**, at an extraordinary meeting of the Group, 13 February;
- **Electing** the **Group's Vice-Presidents** and **Presidents of the Committee bodies** to be presided over by Members of the Civil Society Organisations' Group, at an extraordinary meeting of the Group, 10 September;
- **Designation of Members to EESC bodies**, including the Vice-Presidency of Sections and membership to Section Bureaus, at an extraordinary meeting of the Presidency, 9 October;
- **Information session** on the functioning and the role of the Civil Society Organisations' Group within the EESC, at an extraordinary meeting of the Group, 24 November.



Studies

- **Requesting** the EESC to commission a study on the topic *'Breaking the cycle of disadvantage – reviewing EU policy through the lens of poverty'*;
- **Presenting** the draft intermediate report of the **2024 Group initiated study 'Mapping civil dialogue practices in the EU Institutions'** at the Group conference on *'Turn up the volume for civil society! Key actions for the EU's new political cycle'*, 3 March 2025.

Group own-initiative Opinions

- **Requesting** the following three **Group own-initiative Opinions** in 2025:
 - *'The future of the EU strategy on the **rights of persons with disabilities** post 2025'*;
 - *'Inter-dependences between **AI applications and liberal professions services**: addressing urgent societal needs'*;
 - *'Reducing barriers to **inclusive entrepreneurship**, promoting innovation and providing equal opportunities for all'*;
- Where possible and relevant, **presenting** these own-initiative Opinions at **thematic Group events** or **ordinary Group meetings**, during the course of the year.

Thematic events

- Group conference *'Turn up the volume for civil society! Key actions for the EU's new political cycle'*, **Brussels**, 3 March;
- Group conference on a topic to be defined with the Polish delegation of the Group, within the context of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, Warsaw, **Poland**, 15 & 16 May;
- Group conference *'Building Green: Public spaces and buildings ensuring sustainability, accessibility and social inclusion'* to mark the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU, Copenhagen, **Denmark**, 2 & 3 July;
- Meetings and/or events of the **five Categories** managed by the Secretariat of the Civil Society Organisations' Group, on topical subjects of particular interest to the Categories and in line with the **streamlined approach** adopted at the end of 2023.



Thematic debates during ordinary meetings of the Group

- Debates on one or more current topics of interest to the Group, e.g. the forthcoming **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**, promoting the **SDGs** and the **green transformation** through sustainable European financing, strengthening **volunteering** in the EU, the **European Climate Adaptation Plan**, an **EU Vision for Agriculture and Food**, the **European Civil Protection Mechanism**, etc.

Strategic outreach to the European Institutions

- **Following-up** on the exploratory missions to **Poland** and **Denmark** in 2024, in relation to those countries' Presidencies of the Council of the EU in 2025;
- **Proactively engaging** with the forthcoming **presidencies of the Council of the EU** (2026) via **ex ante meetings** and/or **exploratory missions** (in anticipation of exploratory Opinions to the EESC and Group conferences in the countries holding the presidencies);

- Taking steps to establish working relations with relevant **European Commissioners**, e.g. Commissioners McGrath, Ribera Rodriguez, Jørgensen, Hansen or Micallef;
- Engaging in structured outreach to the **European Parliament (MEPs, relevant inter-groups, political groups and committees)** with regard to thematic Group events, Group own-initiative Opinions, Group studies, follow-up to the Group's 2024 Open Letter on civil dialogue, meetings of the Categories, etc;
- Fully utilising the contacts of the **Members** of the Civil Society Organisations' Group with the **European Institutions**, in order to **advance the priorities of the Group**.



Proactive outreach to networks of CSOs

- Continuing to actively **reach out** to and cooperate with external **European level CSO networks, umbrella and/or sectoral CSOs**, e.g., bilateral meetings on topics of common interest, speaking opportunities and where resources are available, potential partnerships on events.
For example, the partnership event with the European Anti Poverty Network (**EAPN**) on 8 April, to launch the '*2024 EAPN Poverty Watch Report*';
- Building on the contacts of the **Members** of the Civil Society Organisations' Group with **European and national CSOs**, in order to strengthen dialogue and advance the priorities of the Group and the Committee;

- In the event where sufficient resources are available to continue the project '*Involvement of civil society representatives from candidate countries in the work of the EESC*' – **Enlargement Candidate Members (ECMs)**, the Group will continue to provide a supporting role to the lead services, in order to enhance relations and promote qualitative input from CSOs in the candidate countries.



Promoting the interests of the Group and enhancing cooperation with the EESC at large

- Promoting the Group's views in key EESC horizontal bodies, e.g., the **Liaison Group**, the Commission for financial and budgetary affairs (**CAF**), the Communication Commission (**COCOM**), the **political monitoring group with the Committee of the Regions**, the **Audit Committee and the Questors**;
- Advancing the Group's interests in EESC Ad hoc groups of particular relevance to the Group, e.g. on **Youth** and **Equality**;
- Advocating the Group's priorities in important flagship EESC initiatives such as the **EESC Civil Society Week**, the **EESC Youth Test** and the involvement of **CSOs from EU candidate countries** (ECMs);
- Facilitating **more cooperation** between the **different sectors** represented within the **Civil Society Organisations' Group**;
- Facilitating more **synergies** between the **Group** and the **Categories; the Group and EESC Sections**;
- The Group will also continue to work towards ongoing **reform within the Committee**, with the aim of further recognising and strengthening its role in European civil dialogue.



Effective communication by the Group

- **Encouraging Members** of the Civil Society Organisations' Group to actively engage in **communication outreach** with all relevant stakeholders;
- Overall **communication support** by the Group Secretariat, on the Group's outreach to **CSOs** and the **European Institutions**;
- Ongoing **communication** and **social media** coverage of the **EESC's plenaries, key events** by the EESC, the Group and the Categories, **missions** and **speeches** by the Group President;
- Monitoring the developments on **social media platforms** particularly X and Bluesky, with a view to deciding whether to change the platform used by the Civil Society Organisations' Group¹;
- Continued publication of the *Civil Society Organisations' Bulletin*, to be converted into a fully electronic format during the course of 2025².



¹ The Bluesky account of the Civil Society Organisations' Group is currently dormant.

² With two paper issues per year, linked to the Group's thematic events in the countries of the presidencies of the Council of the EU



European Economic and Social Committee

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