



European Economic and Social Committee

NAT/499
**Rio+20: towards the green
economy and better
governance**

Brussels, 12 September 2011

OPINION

of the

Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
on the

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:**

Rio+20: towards the green economy and better governance

COM(2011) 363 final

The contribution of European organised civil society

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On 20 June 2011, the European Commission decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 304 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Rio+20: towards the green economy and better governance
COM(2011) 363 final.

The Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 6 September 2011.

At its ... plenary session, held on ... (meeting of ...), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by ... votes to ... with ... abstentions.

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1. Conclusions and recommendations

- 1.1 The European Economic and Social Committee believes that the Rio 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must send out a clear signal to the world community, with specific proposals for the transition to an economic order based on qualitative economic growth that helps to eliminate poverty and social injustice whilst preserving natural resources for future generations.
- 1.2 The Committee welcomes the Commission Communication¹ as an important starting point for a shared analysis and positioning of the EU institutions in preparation for the Rio+20 conference. In this context the Committee refers to its work on the Resource efficiency flagship initiative and to the Low Carbon Roadmap 2050². Against this background, the Committee would like to set the following priorities.
- 1.3 The EESC is convinced that the transition to a sustainable economy must be integrated into an overarching sustainable development strategy and handled fairly. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission, too, is now addressing the social dimension of sustainable development. The Committee would like to see more emphasis on this aspect. The fundamental preconditions for this are: social cohesion, equity, including intergenerational

¹ COM(2011) 363 final.

² CESE 692/2011 and CESE 1054/2011 (not yet adopted)

equity, fair redistribution and solutions to social problems such as growing inequality, lack of access to a whole range of resources, poverty and unemployment.

- 1.4 The Committee supports the policy recommendations of the ILO on Green Jobs and stresses the need for the social partners to be actively involved in greening the work environment. It also wholeheartedly endorses the Social Protection Floor Initiative, which aims at providing for a basic set of social rights and transfers, as well as the supply of an essential level of goods and social services accessible to all.
- 1.5 The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission communication has been published jointly by the Commissioners for the environment and for development. This clearly emphasises the connection between the environment, sustainable development and development aid. The Committee calls for the reappraisal of EU development aid policy to be driven by the concept of sustainable development and for this to be reflected in the structure of aid payments right down to the design of local development aid projects.
- 1.6 The EESC condemns in the strongest possible terms the fact that a billion human beings suffer from hunger in various parts of the world and particularly in developing countries – a situation wholly at odds with the aim of achieving the first of the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee is convinced that ensuring access to resources, food and energy should be amongst the priorities of the global sustainability agenda. For these goals to be achieved, the active participation of civil society in policymaking at local and national level is essential. The role of women in developing countries deserves particular emphasis.
- 1.7 The Committee is convinced that policy measures are needed at international, national, regional and local level using a broad spectrum of policy instruments to bring about a transition to a "green economy". These include measures to ensure that market prices adequately reflect environmental costs, together with a greening of fiscal policy that shifts taxation from work to resource consumption. Public spending programmes should be geared to encouraging investment in sustainable technologies and projects. Environmentally damaging subsidies should be phased out, whilst taking due account of the social impact of doing this. Public procurement must be used to support environment-friendly products and services. Measures should be taken to improve complementarity between worldwide trade and sustainable development.
- 1.8 Clear indicators must be established to measure progress on the road to greater sustainability. Methods should be developed for measuring economic progress in terms not just of GDP, but also of improvements in human welfare and quality of life, with reference to the fight against poverty, the creation of decent working conditions and preservation of the natural environment. Keeping in mind its opinion *Beyond GDP - measurements for sustainable*

*development*³, the EESC intends, even before the Rio+20 conference, to set out its position on how civil society should be involved in developing these indicators.

- 1.9 In this context, the Rio+20 conference should adopt a mandate for a "green economy" that should be actively pursued by the United Nations. This mandate should encompass six main points:
- measuring progress towards a green economy;
 - regulatory measures to encourage the transition to a green economy;
 - education about sustainability to promote a green economy;
 - fiscal policy instruments to promote a green economy;
 - public spending and investment in a green economy;
 - setting targets for a green economy.
- 1.10 The achievements of efforts under the above-mentioned mandate should be used to draw up action plans and strategies at national level for a transition to a green economy, taking account of the national circumstances of each country.
- 1.11 Governance at international and UN level in the field of sustainable development and the environment urgently needs to be strengthened and better integrated if the necessary steps by the world community to achieve sustainable development are to be taken. The Rio+20 conference must be used to create a solid institutional framework at UN level. UNEP should be beefed up and further developed as an institution. The Committee also thinks that a Council for Sustainable Development made up of political leaders from UN member states and reporting directly to the General Assembly would help in meeting the challenges of the steps needed to ensure sustainable development and usher in a green economy.
- 1.12 A successful transition to a sustainable economy depends on it being accepted and supported by civil society. The Committee therefore explicitly calls for civil society representatives to be actively involved in the preparations for and follow-up to the Rio+20 conference and for them to be effectively heard during the negotiations at the conference and implementation of the results. Current forms of participation should be examined to see whether they do this job efficiently. The Committee is already actively supporting this process ahead of the Rio+20 conference by holding conferences with civil society and through consultations with representatives of European civil society and other regions of the world.
- 1.13 Governance for sustainable development should be strengthened at national, regional and local levels, and in the management of businesses. A precondition for this is effective, formal participation by civil society, through democratic processes and systems of dialogue, in issues and projects that are significant to the greening of the economy and to sustainable development. Europe should bring its positive experience with public participation in

³ [OJ C 100, 30.4.2009, p. 53.](#)

decision-making processes, access to environmental information and access to justice on the basis of the Aarhus Convention into the discussion at the Rio+20 summit and push for the establishment of similar structures at global level.

- 1.14 In order to ensure that the call for long-term sustainability is heeded more effectively and on a judicial basis, the Committee supports the initiative of the World Future Council⁴ to introduce ombudsmen for future generations at UN and national level.
- 1.15 The EU and its Member States should put their own house in order on all the challenges of sustainable development and moving to a green economy. The EESC is convinced that the EU's negotiating position at Rio+20 will be strengthened if it is true to its historical responsibility and sets itself ambitious targets for sustainable development. It has already done this in some areas, but in others much more needs to be done, and in some cases a start still has to be made. The Committee urges the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament to fully implement all existing emission reduction targets by 2020 and to consider whether the emissions reduction target set for 2020 should not be increased to 25% so that future targets can be met cost-effectively and the way can be paved for further global agreements. In addition, the objective of increasing energy efficiency by 20% by 2020 should finally be made binding. In general, the EU should ensure that the policy implications of shifting towards a greener economy for more sustainable development are reflected in the definition of the new multiannual financial framework and the design of its major policies such as agricultural cohesion, trade and development policies and further implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. The EU should review its sustainability strategy after the Rio+20 conference.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to hold a new UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in Rio in 2012.
- 2.2 In 2010, the EESC discussed the EU's approach to this important event, and it issued its first opinion on the subject in September 2010⁵. Since then, preparatory meetings have been held in New York and elsewhere, and the European Commission has published a communication (COM(2011) 363 final) on possible EU guidelines for the negotiations at the Rio+20 summit. In this opinion, building on a wide-ranging discussion with representatives of civil society organisations, the EESC further develops its positions and pushes for a number of points to be taken up as cornerstones in an EU negotiation strategy for the Rio+20 summit.

⁴ <http://www.futurejustice.org/action-the-campaign/?section=full#21>.

⁵ Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee *Towards a 2012 World Summit for Sustainable Development*, OJ C 48, 15.2.2011, p. 65.

2.3 The General Assembly resolution determined that the Conference should have three objectives:

- securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development;
- assessing progress to date and remaining gaps in implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development;
- addressing new and emerging challenges.

2.4 **Current state of play:** Although there has been progress on some aspects of sustainable development over the past 20 years, the situation is deteriorating in many areas:

- poverty has increased in absolute terms, with 2.6 billion people living on less than USD 2 a day;
- 1.5 billion workers, half the global total, work under insecure conditions. In 2010 the highest level of unemployment since records began was measured;
- carbon emissions and carbon levels in the atmosphere are continuing to increase and climate change is having an increasingly damaging impact on living conditions in many parts of the world;
- migration is on the increase globally, putting additional pressure on the environment and security of supply;
- current demographic trends mean that by 2050 the world's population will have grown to around 9 billion, further exacerbating these problems.

2.5 **New and emerging challenges:** The growing world population and continuing growth in expectations in relation to standards of living and material consumption are beginning to place strain on the world's supplies of food, energy and other natural resources. This is leading to higher prices and severe social and political problems.

2.6 Maintaining or achieving adequate food security, energy security, and resource security for all current and future generations in a world of increasing population and limited natural resources is one of the biggest new challenges facing the world in the century ahead. Ultimately, qualitative economic growth is needed that helps to eliminate poverty and social injustice whilst preserving natural resources for future generations. Establishing institutional structures for meeting this challenge should be a central issue for the 2012 summit.

2.7 The financial and economic crisis has preoccupied political leaders and finance and economics departments over the past three years. But these pressing short-term issues must not be allowed to distract attention from emerging problems in the real economy and the urgent need to transform the operation of the world's economies in a more sustainable, fairer and greener direction. This transition should itself be a major source of new investment and new jobs, and should create greater equity, cohesion, stability and resilience. It could help solve the current economic difficulties.

2.8 **Renewed political commitment:** Rio 2012 provides a crucial opportunity to build a framework for this transformation, and to establish the high-level political commitment to making this change a reality. It is essential that heads of government themselves take hold of the issues, attend the conference and guarantee that it is followed through. As global economic transition is the key theme of the conference, ministers for finance, the environment and development must also take part in it.

2.9 Sustainable development relies on civil society initiatives and participation. Civil society needs to be actively involved both in preparations for the summit and in its follow-up and implementation. Forums for dialogue should be established at national and international level to facilitate dialogue between civil society stakeholders, and between civil society and political decision-makers, on issues relating to the greening of the economy and sustainable development.

2.10 The General Assembly resolution identifies two specific themes:

- a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
- the institutional framework for sustainable development.

2.11 It will not be possible to reach agreement at a single summit meeting on everything that needs to be done in the world to green the global economy and promote sustainable development more effectively. We consider therefore that the main aim of the conference should be to establish a robust institutional framework within the UN system for implementing the conference decisions, a framework which would have ongoing responsibility for promoting sustainable development throughout the world and for driving an action programme to green the global economy over the coming years.

3. **The institutional framework: a new Council for Sustainable Development**

3.1 At international level the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) has had responsibility for monitoring progress on sustainable development in the world for the past 19 years. However, the CSD is no longer effective in its present form. It has produced some good analyses of problems, but it has not proved capable of following through with substantive action. A more powerful structure within the UN system is needed to tackle the big global sustainability issues more effectively.

3.2 Amongst the various options for strengthening the institutional structure within the United Nations, the EESC supports the emerging concept of a new top-level **Sustainable Development Council** that would report directly to the General Assembly and integrate and strengthen the work currently done separately in the UN ECOSOC and CSD.

3.3 All the countries of the world, represented by their political leaders, should belong to this council. It should be charged with driving forward global action on all aspects of sustainable

development, promoting the transition to a greener economy, and initiating action on new and emerging issues such as food and energy security.

- 3.4 The new council should establish close links with the World Bank and the IMF, which should themselves be given a new mission: to put promotion of sustainable development at the heart of their work.
- 3.5 UNEP and UNDP should be strengthened so that they can together provide stronger inputs on the environmental and developmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- 3.6 **National governance:** At the same time as establishing effective UN bodies, political leaders need to use the opportunity of the Rio Summit to reinvigorate their own national machinery for sustainable growth.
- 3.7 National Sustainable Development Strategies need to be revived and refreshed with full engagement and support from business and all parts of civil society. Advisory bodies such as Councils for Sustainable Development need to be adequately resourced to play their full part in bringing forward new thinking and maintaining pressure for progress.
- 3.8 **Regional, city and local governance:** There are many excellent examples all over the world of what subnational authorities can achieve. The summit should showcase the best examples and commit national governments to mandating and supporting their regional and local governments in making further advances.
- 3.9 **The role of business and the social partners:** Building on best practice, the time is ripe for prescribing best business practice on sustainability more widely by drawing up a framework convention on corporate sustainability responsibility and a framework convention on accountability based on ISO 26000. Negotiations to this end should be launched at the summit and the social partners should be fully involved in this process.
- 3.10 **The role of civil society:** The transition to a sustainable economy can only succeed if civil society is actively involved in this process. This calls for democratic processes and forums for dialogue between civil society and political decision-makers. Information about the environment, progress towards a greener economy and other aspects of sustainable development needs to be made generally available in each country so that there can be an informed public debate about the key issues. In Europe the 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) has been successful in extending and entrenching public rights of access to information, and in promoting public participation and access to justice. The summit should encourage moves to establish similar conventions in all regions of the world and the new Council for Sustainable Development should be mandated to pursue this objective within a global framework.

3.11 **Ombudsmen for future generations:** The needs of future generations are a crucial element of sustainable development, but are not represented in the relevant decision-making processes. In order to put this right and ensure that long-term interests are heeded more effectively and on a judicial basis, the Committee supports the initiative of the World Future Council⁶ to introduce ombudsmen for future generations at UN and national level.

4. **The green economy**

4.1 At present the global economy does not work in a way that will deliver sustainable development. On the environmental side it encourages over-consumption of natural resources, allows pollution of the environment, and fails to prevent climate change; on the social side it allows pervasive unemployment and widespread poverty, poor health and lack of education.

4.2 Greening the global economy means reorienting the way it operates so as to deliver more sustainable outcomes. Other economic objectives need to be reassessed in terms of their contribution to sustainable development. All the tools of economic management need to be reset so as to steer the economy in a more sustainable direction.

4.3 In economic development hitherto, economic growth has been an important prerequisite for raising the general standard of living. This must remain a central aim in future, particularly for developing countries, in which decent living conditions for all have yet to be created. A green economy is designed to decouple economic growth from negative environmental impact. It must be an element in a sustainable development strategy aimed at qualitative economic growth that helps to eliminate poverty and social injustice whilst preserving natural resources for future generations. The transition to a green economy must be compatible with the fundamental principles of justice, cooperation and shared but different responsibilities.

4.4 The EESC welcomes the fact that international climate change talks are now taking into account the social and decent work dimension of the transition towards a low-carbon economy, as stated in the shared vision for long-term global action of the Cancun Agreements. It supports the policy recommendations of the ILO on Green Jobs and stresses particularly the need for active cooperation between the social partners in greening the work environment.

4.5 Greening the economy is a major task that has to be carried through in many different arenas:

- at international, national and local levels of government;
- in many different sectors of the economy;
- involving businesses of all kinds, the social partners and many other economic actors;
- involving citizens and consumers.

⁶ <http://www.futurejustice.org/action-the-campaign/?section=full#21>.

- 4.6 The Rio conference should generate a new political commitment to promoting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy throughout the world. Conference participants should set out principles for the transition to a greener economy. They should also give a mandate to the competent UN bodies to develop an action-oriented work programme on key issues for the advancement of sustainable development in the world.
- 4.7 **A "green economy" mandate for the bodies of the United Nations:** The Committee suggests that six main pillars, or chapters, should be included in a mandate for the further work of UN bodies on sustainable development:
- measuring progress towards a green economy;
 - regulatory measures to encourage the transition to a green economy;
 - education about sustainability to promote a green economy;
 - fiscal policy instruments to promote a green economy;
 - public spending and investment in a green economy;
 - setting targets for a green economy.
- 4.8 The EU and its Member States have gained a wealth of experience in using policy instruments to promote sustainability. The EU should therefore actively bring this experience to bear at international level.
- 4.9 **Measuring progress towards a greener economy:** Parameters need to be established that give a clear indication of the progress that is being made towards greater sustainability. Methods should be developed for measuring economic progress in terms of improvements in human welfare and quality of life, with reference to the fight against poverty, the creation of decent working conditions and preservation of the natural environment. In particular, methods must be agreed for measuring the use of various kinds of natural capital in the soil, water and different ecosystems that results from economic activity.
- 4.10 A timetable for establishing a system to measure progress towards a green economy should be agreed at the summit.
- 4.11 In its opinion *Beyond GDP - measurements for sustainable development*⁷, the EESC put forward ideas about the limitations of the GDP indicator, possible corrections and additions, and the need to develop new criteria on the basis of which additional indicators for welfare and (economic, social and ecological) sustainability could be established. The EESC intends, before the Rio+20 conference, to set out its position on how civil society should be involved in developing these indicators.
- 4.12 **Regulatory measures:** Within Europe, efficiency standards for many different products and processes (particularly energy efficiency standards) have been driven steadily upwards by

⁷ [OJ C 100, 30.4.2009, p. 53.](#)

progressive tightening of minimum standards over the years. Europe should propose similar machinery for driving the same process forward internationally. It might also be appropriate to develop new international initiatives for chemicals management and for regulating the impact of emerging technologies, such as nanotechnology.

- 4.13 **Education and information exchange:** There are several individual countries, regions, cities, businesses, etc. that already demonstrate the success of the sustainability transition in action.
- 4.14 Europe has been active in promoting education about sustainability, and in spreading information about best practice and new initiatives in the sustainability field. The resulting experience should feed in to the international discussion of instruments for a green economy.
- 4.15 **Fiscal measures:** The summit should give a further impetus to national and international efforts to green the fiscal base by eliminating perverse subsidies and shifting tax burdens away from taxes on labour and more towards pollution and consumption of fossil fuels and other natural resources that need to be better conserved. The time is also ripe for launching a new initiative to tax financial transactions on a globally agreed basis, and to use the proceeds to fund sustainable development investments.
- 4.16 **Investing in research and development:** The competent bodies of the United Nations should be mandated to identify which areas of research and development of technologies and instruments for a green economy would benefit from consolidation of R&D efforts through international cooperation. It will be important that new greener technologies are taken up rapidly all around the world. The competent bodies of the United Nations should be specifically charged with identifying any barriers to the rapid transfer of such technologies and with developing ways to overcome them.
- 4.17 **Public procurement programmes** can be a powerful instrument for driving producers towards greener products and services. Europe has experience in using "green" public procurement whilst observing the principles of free trade within Europe. The competent bodies of the United Nations should be specifically charged with promoting best practice in this area throughout the world.
- 4.18 **Investment flows – a new global deal:** Authoritative estimates of the global investment needed in the energy sector alone to move to a low carbon economy over the next 40 years run to trillions of euros. Other aspects of the sustainability transition will also need very large sums. The competent bodies of the United Nations should be tasked with providing a forum for monitoring the major global flows of investment, and identifying where they need to be increased or modified in order to support the sustainability transition.
- 4.19 The capacity to make the sustainability transition varies considerably between countries in terms of natural, economic and human resources. A very important challenge for the 2012 summit is how to give more substance and scale to a global deal to mobilise public and private

resources for capacity-building, technology transfer and sustainable investment programmes to help the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other developing countries keep pace with the sustainability transition in an equitable way. The competent UN bodies should be mandated to monitor progress on financial and other commitments to assist developing countries in the sustainability transition.

5. **Targets in key sectors**

- 5.1 A greener economy will affect all the main economic sectors. In each sector it will be necessary to promote greater efficiency in the use of energy and all other natural resources, to reduce the impacts of pollution and waste production, to have greater regard for the natural environment and biodiversity, and to ensure equity and fairness.
- 5.2 International development objectives are currently focused on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee believes that at their review in 2015 a new set of international development goals should be set for the next period, with greater emphasis on sustainable development objectives. The Rio Summit should adopt this as a general objective and should mandate the new Council to follow it through with specific proposals in the key subject areas. The following paragraphs briefly review the priorities in some of the key sectors.
- 5.3 **Energy:** The greening of the energy sector is the single largest challenge within the whole greener economy project.
- 5.4 The transition to a greener economy requires a radical transformation of the energy sector away from fossil fuels towards low- or zero-carbon sources of power such as renewables. At the same time, in order to manage this transition more economically and efficiently, there needs to be a major effort in all sectors to utilise energy more efficiently and thus to contain or reduce increases in total global energy demand.
- 5.5 Access to clean, affordable and modern energy services is imperative to fostering lasting social and economic development and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the International Energy Agency, worldwide more than 1.4 billion people have no access to electricity. A billion more have access only to unreliable electricity networks. Recently, the UN General Assembly designated 2012 as the "International Year of Sustainable Energy for All" – providing a much-needed opportunity to focus increased international attention on energy poverty, as well as the affordable solutions and business models that already exist and can be deployed on a global scale. The EESC has been actively involved in the debate on sustainable development and sustainable energy and will contribute further to this important topic.

- 5.6 Many people still live in energy poverty, i.e. they have insufficient access to energy. The transition to environmentally sustainable energy sources must have as one of its main aims the sufficient supply of energy at affordable prices to poorer sections of the population.
- 5.7 **Agriculture, biodiversity and the natural environment:** The EESC deplores in the strongest possible terms the fact that a billion human beings suffer from hunger in various parts of the world and particularly in developing countries – a situation wholly at odds with the aim of achieving the first of the Millennium Development Goals.
- 5.8 The EESC calls on the international community to recognise the right to food at international and national level, to strengthen the right to own land and the right of access to land and water, and to keep land-grabbing in check.
- 5.9 The agricultural sector in many parts of the world needs thorough review from the perspective of the green economy and maintaining food security for all, preserving the natural capital of the land and its biodiversity resources, and promoting resource efficiency. There is a particular need to manage and conserve water resources better. New targets are needed in these areas.
- 5.10 The EESC considers the key to sustainable agriculture to lie in maintaining – everywhere and on a sufficient scale – high-quality, regionally differentiated, ecologically sound food production that protects and cares for rural areas, safeguards the diversity and distinctiveness of the products concerned and fosters Europe's diverse, species-rich cultural landscapes and rural areas⁸. Even though we need greater biodiversity worldwide, the number of species continues to fall. Forestry, mining, industry and, not least, population growth also threaten biodiversity.
- 5.11 Effective measures for better, more transparent functioning of agricultural markets should be introduced. The volatility of and unacceptable increase in food prices must be combated. The use of renewable resources in energy production must not happen at the expense of global food supply. Security of food supply should be ensured by maintaining stocks at regional level. We should also aim to make more use of residual biomass from agriculture and food production.
- 5.12 Respect for agricultural workers' rights should be ensured by implementing existing ILO conventions. It is essential for civil society to be actively involved in the implementation of sustainability projects at local and national level. The role of women in developing countries deserves particular emphasis.

⁸ Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on *Reform of the common agricultural policy in 2013*, OJ C 354, 28.12.2010, p.35.

5.13 **Marine environment:** The marine environment is characterised by pollution, overfishing and overexploitation of other marine resources. Conference participants should mandate the competent UN bodies to initiate a new international process to strengthen and coordinate existing mechanisms for protecting the marine environment and to protect fish stocks and other marine resources more effectively than under existing arrangements.

6. **Showing responsibility**

6.1 In order to be credible, the EU first needs to put its own house in order on its approach to sustainability.

6.2 Member States and the EU must:

- collectively reconfirm their political commitment to sustainable development by placing responsibility for it at the centre of government, supported by economics and finance ministers as well as by environment and other ministries;
- reinvigorate their own sustainable development strategies and action programmes;
- engage fully with business and all parts of civil society in preparations for and follow-up to the conference and in promoting sustainable development and the green economy.

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Action Plan

The European Economic and Social Committee is committed to making an active contribution to the process leading up to the 2012 UN conference on sustainable development in Rio. Hearings took place on 23 March and 7 July 2011, while this opinion was being drawn up.

- Once this opinion is adopted, the rapporteur will actively seek to put forward the EESC's position in the interinstitutional dialogue aimed at establishing a common EU position.
- On the basis of the adopted opinion, the EESC will further develop dialogue with European organised civil society. There are plans for joint meetings with the Liaison Group, representatives of national Economic and Social Councils, as well as other civil society organisations and networks that are also in the process of establishing their positions for the Rio+20 conference. A large-scale EESC conference planned for early 2012 will represent a further milestone in this process of discussion with civil society.
- Beyond the dialogue within Europe, the EESC is dealing with the matter of the Rio+20 conference in the context of its relations with representatives of organised civil society in other parts of the world, in particular Brazil, which is hosting the conference, China and South Africa. The

rapporteur will play an active role in this dialogue in order to establish joint priorities in the aims of organised civil society from different parts of the world and to bring these positions to bear in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. The rapporteur will also represent the EESC in the Rio+20-discussion process inside the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS). A series of meetings with our international partners is planned in Rio next year alongside the conference itself.

Brussels, 6 September 2011

The President
of the
Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and
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Mario Campli
