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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

484TH PLENARY SESSION HELD ON 14 AND 15 NOVEMBER 2012

Resolution of the European Economic and Social Committee on “More Europe” — for submission to the European Summit to be held on 22 and 23 November 2012’

(2013/C 11/01)

At its plenary session of 14 and 15 November 2012 (meeting of 15 November), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted this resolution by 187 votes to 28 with 28 abstentions.

The EESC notes that, in light of the ongoing crises, the EU must restore **trust in a dynamic growth model** and in the **legitimacy of its decision-making process**. We must build a **strong, sustainable, social and competitive** Europe.

The EESC therefore calls for:

- **“More Europe”**, which is mutually reinforcing and stronger than the sum of its parts. The EU must disengage itself from being perceived as the grim reaper of austerity, social regression and poverty. Currency union must now be followed by political union, with a policy of coherence between economic, financial, employment and social measures, in the people’s interest. The **EU budget** should be designed so as to provide the right incentives for competitiveness, growth and **more employment**. The EU budget must be strengthened and supported by own-resource mechanisms, a single cohesion policy actively involving civil society and a more interventionist role for the European Investment Bank. As a consequence, the EESC calls on the heads of state or government to deliver a result that is equal to these tasks at the European Summit on 22 and 23 November.
- **Civil society involvement** in the process of framing EU policies and decisions. This is a key instrument not only for strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the European institutions and EU action, but also for encouraging the growth of a shared understanding of what Europe is for and where it is going, and restoring confidence in the EU project by ensuring that European citizens play their part fully in building Europe. To achieve this, the provisions of Article 11 of the EU Treaty on the participatory democracy pillar need to be rapidly implemented as a matter of great urgency.
- Sustainable investments in skills, infrastructure, the social economy, services and products to be reflected in the national reform programmes, in the form of a **social investment pact**, together with a **European stimulus package focused on real job creation** and coordinated with national development plans. This is the only way to ensure that the Europe 2020 strategy succeeds. **Investments in climate-smart energy and industrial production**, together with creating a green economy, will help to solve the long-term problems of climate change and to ensure sustainable development.
- Promotion of common actions in the Eurozone to stabilise debt and support recovery throughout the EU. The ECB should be encouraged to implement its bond-buying programme aimed at stabilising Eurozone borrowing costs, as announced by its president. The programme must of course be carried out in keeping with the ECB’s remit. The EIB should also be supported in issuing project bonds in order to foster growth. The EESC welcomes the decision of 11 Member States to introduce a Financial Transaction

Tax. In this context, the EESC asks the EU to step up efforts to promote transparency and tackle the informal economy, tax fraud and evasion and corruption within and outside the EU. Eurozone activity should remain open for those Member States who want to join Monetary Union.

- **Fiscal, banking and financial unions** that are the necessary supporting pillars of **Economic and Monetary Union**. To implement these measures there is a need for **social dialogue** and **dialogue with organised civil society**.
- Support to SMEs in order to get back to growth with the SBA as a guideline. The Single Market's full potential must be released, including opening up **services** and the role of the **social economy**; removing superfluous administrative burdens and promoting access to information and the new digital technologies, finance, credit, the capital, labour and technology markets and EU financial instruments and loan guarantees for SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- **The protection and the rights of consumers to be upheld**, particularly of the most disadvantaged consumers, who are facing growing over-indebtedness, insecurity, extreme poverty and exclusion.
- A genuine labour market to be created at last, giving mobility to expertise so it can be used where it is needed. The **completion of a single labour market** must be part of the Europe 2020 strategy.
- **A chance for our young people**: The EESC will continue to encourage the EU to promote a Europe of research and innovation, to further invest in European education systems and maintain the necessary resources to fund and strengthen youth mobility programmes such as ERASMUS. The EESC

calls on the Commission to withdraw its EU budget proposal if Member States, who are all the time talking about investment and growth, do not support an EU budget and MFF favourable to investment in the future. Measures are required to support SMEs to take on young employees who are unemployed and may be lacking in experience.

- **The competitiveness of the European economy to be enhanced** by innovations and stable funding for research and development, together with a specific training and support policy for SMEs/micro enterprises and their employees, a support policy for investments, access to markets and a lighter administrative burden. This will also facilitate a renewal of European industry as an important sector for growth and jobs.
- A friendly legal environment, which does not create unnecessary administrative and compliance costs. Economic legislation should be clear, fair and proportionate. This is important for each and every enterprise, but for SMEs in particular.
- A special effort so that the EU is seen as an **active and global partner**. The EU **international trade policy** is also important in this sense: it should foster EU values in support of **sustainable development** and civil society participation, not least by setting up **civil society bodies to monitor the implementation of the trade agreements**.
- A **gender balance** to be ensured by implementing gender legislation and equal opportunities. There remains a 17 % pay gap between men and women for the same work, plus women and children have been most affected by the crisis.

Brussels, 15 November 2012.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Staffan NILSSON
