

European Economic and Social Committee



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The role of civil society in the EU-Japan Relations

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The EESC

- Consultative body: makes EU policies better by uniting diverging interests and issuing opinions
- 344 members from the 27 Member States
- 3 groups: Employers
Workers
Other interests (consumers, farmers, liberal professions, etc.)
- Members coming from civil society organisations
- Scope:
 - Employment and social affairs
 - Transport, energy, infrastructure and information society
 - Single market, consumers
 - Economic and social cohesion
 - Agriculture and the environment
 - External relations



EESC: Consultative body of the EU institutions

**EESC's OPINIONS
(on request or own
initiatives)**

**European
Parliament**

**Council (Member
States)**

**European
Commission**



The role of civil society

- Democracy cannot exist without the participation of civil society
- 2-level dialogue
 - public authorities – civil society organisations
 - among civil society organisations themselves
- The involvement of civil society organisations in shaping policy is beneficial because of:
 - their on-the-ground knowledge
 - their contribution to building consensus
 - their contribution to better adapting policies to reality



EESC activities: economic crisis

- Importance of growth
- Effective coordination of European economic policies
- Financial market regulation in order to curb speculation
- Credit rating agencies: need to set up a European body for assessing sovereign debt
- Ensure public investment in education and training
- Austerity measures should not increase the risk of poverty and an effective social impact assessment must be made and debated



EESC activities: ageing society

- Fight unemployment is one the most effective strategies to ensure pension systems
- Economic opportunities: older people become increasingly important consumers
- Health and care sector: strengthening of preventive healthcare
- A mere rise in legal retirement is not a solution as millions of elderly people could be pushed below the poverty line, particularly women
- If the retirement age is to be raised → necessity to develop work that accommodates older people



EESC activities: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- Recognition of companies' social function in an inclusive society
- Integral part of business strategy, including employees and stakeholders
- Consumers must have accurate information to make choices
- Promote certification instruments
- CSR improve the competitiveness of Europe as a whole (e.g. recruitment among disadvantaged groups and reduction of pollution levels)



EU-Japan civil society cooperation

- a) To learn about each other experience in tackling common challenges (e.g. energy supply and ageing society)
- b) To promote cooperation between EU and Japanese civil society organisations
- c) To feed in European and Japanese policy-makers with joint positions by EU + Japanese civil society organisations on issues of common interest

Objectives of the current EESC mission:

- to broaden the scope of the Japanese civil society organisations the EESC has contact with (employers, trade unions, farmers, consumers, NGOs and other economic and social organisations)
- to assess a possible EU - Japan civil society cooperation in view of the future negotiations for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement / Economic Partnership Agreement



Thank you for your attention

For further information please contact

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