

EP president Tajani and EESC president Dassis commit to improving cooperation, helping people regain trust in Europe

The president of the European Parliament (EP) Antonio Tajani joined the [European Economic and Social Committee \(EESC\)](#) plenary session on Thursday 1 June to discuss the EP's priorities and the strengthening of cooperation between the two institutions.

The EP's six priorities for this year are very much in line with the concerns of Europe's civil society, according to the EESC. They include: giving a new boost to jobs, growth and investment; addressing the social dimension of the European Union; better protecting the security of EU citizens; reforming and developing migration policy in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity; delivering on the commitment to implement a connected Digital Single Market; delivering on the objective of an ambitious Energy Union and a forward-looking climate-change policy.

"The three main challenges we need to work on together are unemployment (especially youth unemployment), migration and terrorism. Most citizens want protection from the EU in particular areas, but there is a high percentage of citizens voting for populism, which means there is discontent," Mr Tajani stated.

Mr Tajani and the **EESC president Georges Dassis** pledged to improve the dialogue between the EP and the EESC both formally and informally and to hold regular exchanges, discuss ideas, engage and deepen the cooperation so as to ensure a quality response to what is happening on the ground. This should in turn improve the effectiveness of EU policies, with a clear impact on the lives of ordinary citizens.

Mr Tajani said the improved cooperation was crucial because of the EESC's vital closeness to the people. "The EESC represents workers, employers, SMEs, etc., and because of that you have the finger on the pulse and you can help us transmit the messages to European citizens," Tajani told the plenary, describing the EESC as "the ears of Europe" and adding that "just like the MEPs, the EESC members are in a position to listen and understand what citizens really want and expect".

EESC president Georges Dassis declared that every single action and work of the Committee made it clear that the EESC stands for European democracy and "is truly engaged in making the slogan – for a united, democratic, solidarity-based, peaceful and prosperous Europe, close to its people – a reality".

Jacek Krawczyk, president of the EESC Employers' Group welcomed the fact that

a number of EP priorities are aligned with what employers ask for: a stable macroeconomic environment; a stronger culture of entrepreneurship; completion of the single market; a more efficient and forward-looking industrial policy, championing free trade and, finally, supporting competitiveness as the key for more employment and for maintaining and enhancing the social dimension of the EU.

Representing the EESC Workers' Group, **Christian Bäuml**er said that stronger cooperation between the two institutions was crucial to secure a strong pillar of social rights in the future. "The EU should be protecting its citizens against the effects of globalisation in order to be seen as more legitimate. We also need to make progress towards reducing unemployment and put an end to inequalities".

Luca Jahier, president of the EESC Various Interests Group, expressed his support for the EP president's statement made at the recent G7 meeting in Taormina, saying that "it is time for Europe to take the lead in matters such as trade and the Paris agreement on climate". He also urged Mr Tajani to make a detailed programme to engage both the EP and the EESC on a joint communication strategy in the run up to the EP elections in 2019, in order to overcome the distance between the EU and its citizens, and to speak with one voice.

The EP and the EESC, together with the European Committee of the Regions, signed the first [Cooperation Agreement](#) in 2014. 