

## Sustainable Development Agenda could be basis for social contract of 21st century, say Europe's Economic and Social Councils to new EU leaders



On the eve of key decisions which will shape the Union's new leadership and strategic agenda for the next five years, the national Economic and Social Councils and the European Economic and Social Council met in Rome on 13-14 June to discuss their role in the sustainable development of Europe and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The debate was part of the Annual Meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries-general of the EESC and the Economic and Social Councils of the UE's Member States, co-organised by the EESC and Italy's Economic and Social Council ([CNEL](#)). The EESC was represented by **President Luca Jahier**, Secretary-general **Gianluca Brunetti** and member **Peter Schmidt**.

Key speakers in the opening session, attended by Italian President **Sergio Mattarella**, included Italy's Foreign Minister **Enzo Moavero Milanesi**, CNEL President **Tiziano Treu**.

*Their conclusions, which will be sent to the EU's main institutions on 17 June, were as follows:*

- the UN's 2030 Agenda has to be the undisputed and overarching priority of the European Union for the next decade, as it can provide responses to the five fundamental transitions that we have to address, namely:
  - an economic transformation,
  - an energy and ecological transformation,
  - an extensive social transformation,
  - a democratic and participatory transformation and
  - a geopolitical transition in international relations.
- The 2030 Agenda is the win-win strategy for all:
  - for employers because the competitiveness battle will take place at global level in the sectors linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda: green mobility, electric cars, renewable energies, plastic processing and batteries.
  - for workers, as several SDGs are linked to the social dimension of Europe: ending poverty (SDG 1); zero hunger (SDG2); good health and well-being (SDG3); quality education (SDG4); gender equality (SDG 5); decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); and reducing inequalities (SDG 10). The 2030 Agenda is therefore a solid firewall against social inequalities and could be the basis for the social contract of the 21st century.
  - for civil society, provided it is fully involved in the governance process. Civil society could prove to be decisive in the proper monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs.
- Significant parts of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) remain largely unaddressed, such as the chapter on Social protection and inclusion. A roadmap needs to be drawn up to boost implementation.
- The European Semester process should be adapted to the 2030 Agenda
- The next Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 should establish sustainable development as its core objective, with 40 % of the overall budget devoted to it. Adequate resources must also be allocated at national level, aligning national fiscal systems with the new sustainable development strategy.
- If the EU is to provide decisive political leadership, the incoming Commission should include a vice-president in charge of making the SDGs part of all EU policies;
- The President of the European Commission should present the progress made and outline further action to implement the SDGs in the annual State of the Union speech.
- The launch of a collective EU journey towards a Sustainable Europe will mobilise civil society and European citizens – young people in particular. This is a project of hope and resilience that has the potential to consolidate unity and solidarity within the EU.
- Economic and Social Councils need to be fully engaged as they could, with their valuable know-how and political weight, help shape sustainable transitions. These intermediary bodies could become councils for civic participation, entrusted with the organisation of public consultations on new sustainable development models.
- Lastly, as the largest economy in the world, the EU must, through its

trade policy, play a fundamental role in promoting the sustainable development agenda on a global level.

The full conclusions of the meeting are available [here](#).

For more information about the event see: <https://bit.ly/2KV0EVh>