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Important Own-Initiative Opinion of the EESC on “Professional Services in the Green Transition”

On December 4th 2024, the European Economic and Social Committee approved, during its plenary session, the own-initiative Opinion Report CCMI/231, titled **“Professional services in the green transition”**. The document in question was



directed by **Rapporteur Violeta Jelic**, member of the Group I (Employers), and **Co-Rapporteur CEPLIS President Gaetano Stella**, member of the Consultative Committee on Industrial Change (CCMI) within EESC.

We would like to remind you that, for its last three terms, EESC has kindly asked CEPLIS to propose a candidate for CCMI membership. Back in 2020, CEPLIS has thus proposed the candidature our President, who subsequently became member of CCMI for a five-year term.

EESC wishes to contribute with this Opinion to the joint effort to restore Europe's competitiveness and strengthen its industrial position, while enhancing the performance of European firms in the green transition. It also wishes to recognise the fundamental role that professional services play in the green transition.

The Own-Initiative Opinion expresses EESC's concern that the greening process may stall due to labour and skill shortages, skill mismatches, and increasing regulatory, administrative and cost burdens, as well as new challenges brought on by rapid changes in supply chains.

The Report expects the changes in the dynamics of manufacturing supply chains to help reposition value chains and to encourage reshoring, with many companies considering bringing back production and services previously offshored to non-EU countries.

It also expresses the view, that the new vision for the Union of Skills needs to be implemented. Consistent reforms need to be carried out in education systems to adapt curricula to changes in the world of work, to support all relevant educational programmes (including STEM), to implement a new strategy for vocational education and training (VET), and to support teachers and improve coordination at EU level.

At the same time, it also recognises the need to encourage educational initiatives at both EU and Member State levels. This could involve for them specific financial incentives for Vocational Educational Training (VET) courses aimed at greening professional services. It could also involve establishing EU-level academic courses to bring in new professionals or train existing professionals in sustainability objectives, and to promote both adaptation to and improvements in existing skills and jobs (upskilling and reskilling programmes). These initiatives could also create new skills for the green and digital transitions, that can be considered ‘twin transitions’, in that they go hand-in-hand and can reinforce each other;.

To this end, it suggests targeting policies to support professional service networking in order to improve the operating scale of the related activities, properly accounting for each Member States’ specific characteristics. The Opinion points out that the skill gap could be closed by following the above suggestions and by training skilled professionals within Europe, or by attracting professionals from outside the EU through policies and initiatives.

The EESC document finally emphasises the important role that social partners, professional service organisations and other relevant civil society organisations play in successful and just green transition processes. It also highlights other challenges in the broad context of professional service provision, including barriers to qualification recognition, which will need to be lifted to help leverage professional mobility and address skill gaps. The EESC recommends continuous efforts in this field, also through follow-up opinions on these issues.

If you wish to have more information, feel free to contact Our Secretariat. In addition, if you wish to read the full Opinion, please click on the following link: [Own-Initiative Opinion](#)

The European Parliament elects the new European Ombudsman

During the last plenary session of 2024, after a series of eliminatory votes, MEPs agreed on selecting Teresa Anjinho, former deputy national Ombudsman from Portugal, as the new European Ombudsman.

Her strong national experience, as well as her “hands-on experience” at the European level, thanks to her current post at OLAF, the EU anti-corruption body, have played in favour of Ms Anjinho’s election, which she won against five other candidates coming from across the Union.



Mrs Teresa Anjinho, European Ombudsman-elect

As future EU watchdog-in-chief, she will be tasked to answer and investigate complaints of maladministration of citizens, as well as to monitor all actions from EU institutions, to ensure that they are carried out transparently and in accordance with existing rules, guaranteeing full accountability of EU institutions, civil servants, and elected representatives.

Ms Anjinho announced immediately after her election that she would make it a priority to remedy to the decades-long relative anonymity the Ombudsman office is suffering in order to enable all citizens to raise alarm when needed.

The new Ombudsman will succeed to Emily O'Reilly, whose 10-year tenure is due to end in February.

New EP committees to work on health, security and defence, democracy, housing

Just before the Christmas – New Year’s Eve break, the European Parliament has approved changes put forward by its Conference of Presidents, establishing two new standing and two special committees.



The existing subcommittees on Security and Defence and on Public Health have been transformed into fully-fledged committees. In 2025, there will also be two new special committees: one on the so-called “Democracy Shield” initiative included in the Commission’s 2024-2029 political guidelines, and another to deal with the EU’s current housing crisis. The changes were put forward by President Metsola and the leaders of Parliament’s political groups to address Europe’s current challenges as well as Parliament’s own priorities, while taking into account citizen concerns and the results of the European elections.

MEPs voted in Strasbourg on the proposals laying down the responsibilities and size of all four committees, and the 12-month term of office of the two special ones:

- **Standing committees on Security and Defence and on Public Health, each comprising 43 members - 448 votes for, 161 against, 40 abstentions;**
- Special committee on the European Democracy Shield, comprising 33 members - 441 votes for, 178 against, 34 abstentions;
- Special committee on the Housing Crisis in the European Union, comprising 33 members - 480 votes for, 148 against, 20 abstentions;

The membership of the two standing and two special committees (which should reflect Parliament’s composition) will be determined by each political group and non-attached MEPs. The composition of the committees will then be announced during the 20-23 January 2025 plenary session. The subcommittees on Security and Defence and on Public Health will cease to exist on the first day of the January plenary session and all four committees will be formally set up on the same day. The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each committee will be elected at their respective constitutive meetings.

Changes to the list and responsibilities of standing committees (Annex VI of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure), as well as the establishment of special committees, require a decision of the

Conference of Presidents and a plenary vote. Special committees, created to address specific issues, can sit for up to 12 months - unless their term is extended by a vote in Parliament. The responsibilities of the new standing committees will be complementary to the adapted mandates of the committees on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), which have been the “parent” committees of the pre-existing subcommittees. Accordingly, the ENVI committee will also be renamed “Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety.”

News from our members:

ENC Warmly Invites you to The Final Conference of the EU-Funded Project Telenursing

As you may know, our member ENC is currently an active partner of the European project TeleNursing (www.telenursing.eu). Through this project, ENC and the other partners aim to **develop a digital transformation plan to enhance the digital skills and the competence development of health professionals at the front line of healthcare services provision.**



In that context, we would like to remind you **that you are kindly invited to the final Conference of this project, scheduled to be held in the premises of the Club de la Fondation Universitaire in Brussels on January 22nd, from 9:00 AM CET to 2:00 PM CET. Academics, professionals, organisations, and decision-makers will be invited to discuss the conclusions of our project and the future of health professions.**

To be added to the list of attendees, kindly please register at the link below.

In addition, we would like to remind you that, in the context of this project, we are offering to five nurses registered in your regulatory body the opportunity to participate in our free of charge training. Through digital courses, they aim to provide them with the necessary digital skills and competences to empower them to use digital tools to enhance their activity and reach patients otherwise, untreated. To access the training program, no need to undergo a complex registration process: you just need to provide them with their names and email address.