

# #EESCplenary: EESC president Luca Jahier and European Parliament vice-president Klára Dobrev together for a stronger, safer and happier Europe



The September plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hosted a debate where the Committee's president, Luca Jahier, reiterated his priorities for the future of Europe and the European Parliament vice-president, Klára Dobrev, presented the institution's focus for the 2019-2024 legislature.

The EESC president, **Luca Jahier**, addressed the European Parliament vice-president, **Klára Dobrev**, and underlined the importance of being closer to European citizens, strengthening democracy and increasing civic participation in EU policy-making, while at the same time demonstrating that Europe is committed to delivering results.

"The EESC has always had a clear position towards the European Project: we need more and better Europe and we will support any action towards that objective, but we need to demonstrate to the European citizens that Europe delivers!," he declared. "Citizens have to be at the core of the institutions and without civil society, democracy remains fragile. Our members are the real bridge between citizens and EU institutions," he added.

**Ms Dobrev** was pleased to note that the Committee and the European Parliament were on the same wavelength. "We have to realise that our short political mandate will depend on our long political commitment. We need to listen to European citizens and this is a common task of all institutions. We need to hear their voice, they are asking for more security and better living conditions," she said.

**Mr Jahier** stressed that a close and structured cooperation among all EU institutions was essential. "The European Parliament and the EESC should work more together. Our relations are important because the Parliament represents the voice of the EU citizens, whereas the Committee is the voice of civil society," he indicated.

Looking ahead, **Mr Jahier** maintained that "the European Parliament will play a key role in the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe and this initiative should include civil society and the EESC as they provide clear added value. Together we are stronger and we can deliver better," he concluded.

**Ms Dobrev** highlighted that the latest European elections had a record turnout. The European people sent a message that created confidence in the European institutions, because Eurosceptics parties did not take over, but

also responsibility. "The focus now is on the citizens and a strong Europe means a strong European economy but also a strong social Europe," she added. "Our priorities will be deepening the economic and monetary union, dealing with unemployment and tackling the social impact of climate change."

Referring to cooperation among EU institutions, **Ms Dobrev** stressed that transparency and inclusivity were essential as well as a more structured approach to working with civil society. "Discussion is the central point for good and transparent governance and structured cooperation is a fundamental partner in decision-making. It's the system of checks and balances," she said. "The more structured our cooperation is, the more chances we have for it to be successful. We have to shape Europe together, not only in conferences and public events, but in our daily work, to help achieve a better and happier Europe," she concluded.

The presidents of the Committee's groups also took the floor. On the side of the employers, **Jacek Krawczyk** said that European values needed to be continuously defended and protected and that it was important to meet the expectations of the citizens. For the workers, **Oliver Röpke** argued that the main objective was to regain the trust of the people in the European project and in the work of the institutions. Finally, on behalf of the Diversity Europe Group, **Arno Metzler** pointed to the importance of having an open exchange and a good collaboration with the European Parliament.