

EU Platform for Change launched at EESC

EESC President **Georges Dassis** and European Commissioner for Transport **Violeta Bulc**, joined by Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure **Kadri Simson** and Chair of the European Parliament's Transport Committee **Karima Delli**, officially launched the EU Platform for Change at a major conference at the EESC in Brussels on 27 November 2017. The platform aims to increase female employment and equal opportunities in the transport sector.

The EU Platform for Change was officially launched by **Georges Dassis**, EESC President, and **Violeta Bulc**, European Commissioner for Transport, in the presence of **Kadri Simson**, Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure, and **Karima Delli**, Chair of the European Parliament's TRAN Committee, at a conference co-organised in Brussels by the Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) and DG MOVE on 27 November 2017. The Platform has been developed by the EESC in cooperation with the European Commission with a view to increasing female employment and equal opportunities in the transport sector. It will enable stakeholders from all transport sectors to highlight their specific initiatives promoting gender equality and to exchange good practices.

"Trying to improve equality between men and women in the transport sector is not only a question of gender equality: it is an economic and social imperative, and it is about employment, innovation, sustainability and growth in the EU," stated the EESC President, **Mr Dassis**. According to Commissioner **Bulc**, "Only 22% of transport workers are women. There is huge potential for the sector to improve equal opportunities and I am excited that companies and organisations agree on this and are committing themselves to increasing female employment. By involving women and men together to promote gender equality we will ensure that our societies will flourish at all levels."

"Transport is going through a time of turbulent changes, and women should enjoy equal opportunities in this sector that offers new challenges – we need to make progress in order to achieve a more gender-balanced transport sector," echoed the Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure, **Ms Simson**. "The Platform is an excellent initiative to bring together stakeholders and promote dialogue. We need to find solutions quickly," acknowledged **Ms Delli**, the Chair of the European Parliament Transport Committee, who also underlined "the question of women as users of transport and the issue of safety as a priority."

Other high-level speakers included **Pierre Jean Coulon**, President of the EESC TEN Section and **Madi Sharma**, EESC member and initiator of the idea to set up a Platform (please see the [EESC opinion](#) on "Women and transport – Platform for Change"). During the launch event, participants actively participated in a brainstorming session where they explored the functioning of the Platform and reflected on key topics such as setting targets for female employment, the opportunities brought by innovation, effective initiatives to fight

gender-based violence in the workplace and the feasibility of more flexible shifts to increase work-life balance. Interested parties were also invited to sign a [declaration](#) to make their endeavours in favour of gender equality more widely known.

The Platform, to be managed by the European Commission, will work on a collaborative basis and membership will be open to all stakeholders in the transport sector taking specific measures. Members will set priorities together, have the opportunity to comment on each other's commitments and discuss any other relevant topic.

Further information:

- [Programme](#) of the event
- Sign up to the Platform on the [Commission website](#)
- Twitter: @EESC_TEN #WomenInTransport

Care homes: cost of increased private provision could become barrier to user access unless subsidies rise

With people living longer, the need for affordable care of high quality to support Europe's population increases. In recent years, the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) have repeatedly emphasized the need to contain costs in long term care in order to ensure their sustainability. Yet no harmonised data exists at the European level to accurately map public and private providers of care homes for older people and to assess whether nursing homes and residential care are increasingly becoming a business as a result of the gap left by the cuts in public services during the crisis.

Eurofound's new report Care homes for older Europeans: Public, private and not-for-profit providers is the most comprehensive exercise to date to gather all available data across Member States. The report provides a picture of the quality, accessibility and efficiency of services. Over the last ten years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of private care homes, which has doubled in Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. At the same time, the number of public care homes is either decreasing or growing at a slower pace, with the exception of Malta and Spain, where the number of public homes is increasing faster than private ones. There is a need to agree definitions about public, for-profit and non-profit provision, taking into account legal status, ownership and economic activity of providers.

As demand increases so too does the challenge to maintain public funding and

spending for long-term care, which may ultimately lead to higher co-payments from service users. Some countries already have schemes in place to limit the percentage of a service user's assets that can be used. With results differing between studies and between countries, this report provides a starting point for further research which could ultimately pave the way for reforms that meet the demands of Europe's ageing population.

Publication: [Care homes for older Europeans: Public, private and not-for-profit providers](#)

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Publication: [Care homes for older Europeans: Public, private and not-for-profit providers](#)

EESC hosts Platform for Roma Inclusion addressing education and employment prospects for young Roma

On Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 November 2017 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hosted the 11th European Platform for Roma Inclusion, organised by the European Commission and focusing on the transition of young Roma from education to employment.

The Committee, which has worked on Roma inclusion in recent years, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to host the European Roma Platform on its premises for the first time since it was set up in 2009 to help boost cooperation between stakeholders on successful Roma inclusion.

The high-level event addressed the problem of **extreme marginalisation of Roma in Europe, who face segregation in schools and are largely excluded from labour markets**. The participants included ministers from Member States, the EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, vice-presidents and members of the European Parliament and the EESC, and other high-ranking officials from the EU institutions and various civil society organisations representing Roma.

The EESC's Vice-President for Communication, **Gonçalo Lobo Xavier**, said: "Hosting the platform here in the house of civil society signals the importance of civil society organisations as an agent for positive change for Roma inclusion. We know the importance of bringing all stakeholders together, such as national governments, the EU institutions, international organisations and Roma civil society groups to stimulate cooperation and exchange of experience and good practice."

The EESC has set up a permanent study group with a mandate to monitor and report on how civil society sees the implementation of Roma integration strategies and facilitate further dialogue on Roma issues between civil society groups and the EU institutions.

The group also organises country visits and holds hearings with various stakeholders to raise awareness about Roma discrimination and exclusion in many Member States.

This year's Platform is seeking solutions to the fact that **Roma are the most under-represented group on the labour market**. Many Roma do not finish primary or secondary level education, and often face discrimination when looking for work. According to the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), as many as 63% of young Roma aged between 15 and 24 do not work, attend school or training courses.

The EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, **Věra Jourová**, said: “Europe cannot afford to let young Roma fail to fulfil their potential. The growing proportion of young Roma not in education, employment or training is worrying. Policy-makers need to look carefully at the causes and address them”.

The platform held at the EESC consisted of two workshops which looked closely at the education and employment prospects for young Roma. The recommendations put forward in the workshops were then presented at the high-level political debate on the second day of the event.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (MAIN EESC OPINIONS ON ROMA):

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/esc-opinion-roma-citizens>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/esc-opinion-socio-economic-integration-roma>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/esc-opinion-intercultural-dialogue-and-roma>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/esc-opinion-integration-minorities-roma>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/esc-opinion-roma-societal-empowerment-and-integration>

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/publications-other-work/publications/civil-society-prize-2014-integration-roma>

Press Release: EU Auditors conduct online survey as part of their on-going passenger rights audit

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