

#JubelFestival – EESC members discuss new ideas for the future of Europe

An amazing opportunity to exchange views and a wonderful learning experience. The Jubel Festival, the very first festival on European democracy in Belgium, took place on Saturday 22 September 2018 in Park Leopold in Brussels. EESC members **Pierre Jean Coulon**, **Ronny Lannoo**, **Thierry Libaert** and **Daniel Mareels** contributed to a fruitful meeting on the future of Europe, one that was particularly relevant in view of the upcoming European elections.

Hundreds of participants gathered to discuss the state of play of the European Union and put forward their ideas for the Europe they want. People of all ages, from all background and nationalities, tapped into the potential of the European democracy festival to talk and listen to each other, get inspired, and exchange opinions with European political leaders, civil society organisations and experts.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was represented by a delegation of members: **Thierry Libaert** (Diversity Europe Group) moderated the morning debate, while **Pierre Jean Coulon** (Workers' Group), **Ronny Lannoo** (Diversity Europe Group) and **Daniel Mareels** (Employers' Group) manned the EESC information stand and ran the afternoon workshop in the EESC tent.

The EESC members unanimously underlined that, on the eve of the European elections, there was no time to waste in delivering on promises, and focused on three key points based on the commitment to:

- building a **sustainable and inclusive Europe** (Digital Single Market, Banking Union, Social Pillar, Energy Union, etc.);
- discussing **migration**, bearing in mind the principles of solidarity and the rule of law, which are at the core of any lasting compromise;
- making the EU once more **people-centred**, enabling its citizens to achieve a better quality of life.

A closer and more regular dialogue with citizens is vital. EESC members are representatives of civil society organisations in their respective Member States and face the same everyday challenges as any other European citizen. The EESC has played an active role in this regard over the past 60 years. The EU Institutions and European civil society need to work together to find new ways of consulting people and encouraging them to engage in a genuine civil dialogue and participate in the public debate.

The festival was organised in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee and, among other partners, the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, the French Republic (citizens' consultations on Europe), the King Baudouin Foundation, Stand Up for Europe and Democratic Society.

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