

European Economic and Social Committee

The Role of the EESC in the Trade and Sustainable Provisions of the EU Trade Agreements



The European Economic and Social Committee



What is the EESC?

- It is an **advisory body** set up by the Treaty of Rome (1957)
- Represents **organised civil society**



What is the role of the EESC?

- Consultative role to the European Parliament, Council and Commission (+/- 200 opinions a year)
- Institutional forum for dialogue and consultation
- Promotion of European values, participatory democracy and the role of civil society organisations



A bridge between the EU and organised civil society

- Brings forward civil society's interests
- Enables civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level



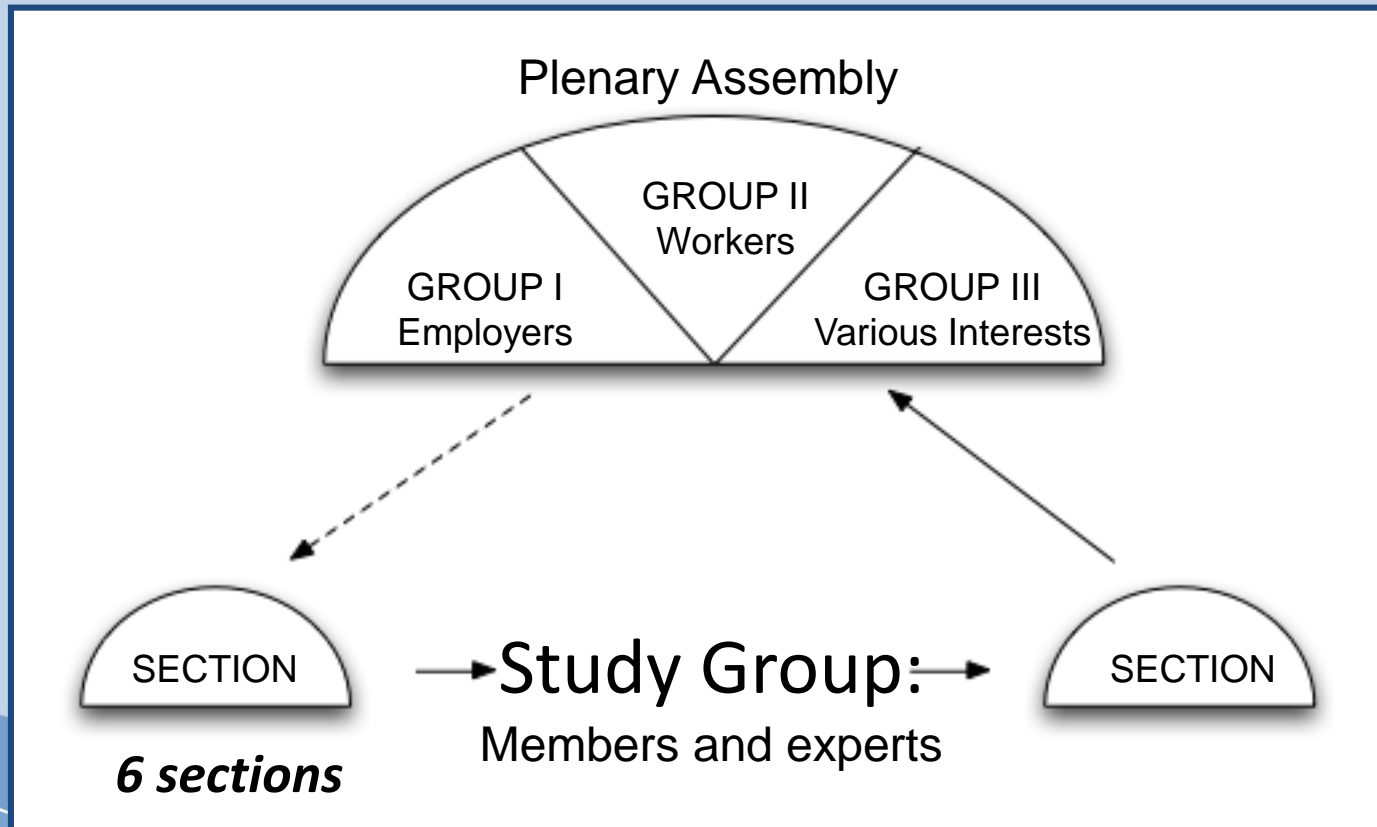
Who are the members of the EESC?

- 353 members, appointed for 5 years
- 1 president, elected every 2 and a half years
- President: Henri Malosse (2013-2015)
- Represent economic and social interest groups: employers, workers, NGOs and others
- Work on the basis of consensus
- Have considerable expertise on many subjects
- Hold +/- 9 plenary sessions a year



How does the EESC work?

Drafting of an opinion



- By signing the agreement, all participants commit themselves to work towards sustainable development, including by upholding social and environmental standards. The EPA also establishes a consultation procedure for environmental or labour issues and defines a comprehensive list of areas in which the partners will cooperate to foster sustainable development. Civil society will have a special role in monitoring the impact of the agreement. In addition, a detailed chapter on development cooperation identifies trade-related areas that could benefit from EU financial support.

The EPA creates joint institutions to support dialogue, the smooth handling of all trade issues, and the monitoring of the impact of the trade deal. The EU will work with its SADC partners to ensure the smooth implementation of the agreement, together with regional and national development cooperation bodies.



Key Messages

- EESC is keen to engage with civil society organizations throughout the implementation of the EU-SADC EPA.
- It is a way for the civil society from both sides to formulate through agreed scope and joint platforms non-binding recommendations.
- Articles 4 and 10 of the EPA leave necessary margin for such initiative
- A civil society platform provides an excellent opportunity for the creation of a network of CSOs in the SADC EPA region that can share experiences and best practices among themselves and with EU CSOs.



EESC Experience

- The EESC has experience in participating in other joint platforms.
- Such specific example is Cariforum where civil society organizations monitor the implementation of the EPA Cariforum Agreement through a joint Consultative Committee. This Committee meets at least once a year to discuss issues of common interest related to the implementation of the EPA agreement.



- Civil society organizations have skills and resources that are vital in helping to build a more robust global community.

Kofi Annan

Let`s not miss the opportunity to express the voice of civil society in SADC EPA





Thank You

