

Press Release

January 2012



European Economic and Social Committee



The United Nations is convening a Summit level Conference on sustainable development in Rio in the summer of 2012, 20 years after the first 1992 Earth Summit and ten years after the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) believes that the Rio+20 Conference must send out a clear signal to the world community for a change towards global sustainable development that helps to eliminate poverty and social injustice whilst preserving natural resources for future generations.

The EESC conference 'Go sustainable, be responsible! European civil society on the road to Rio+20' on 7-8 February 2012 in Brussels is intended to voice European civil society's positions on Rio+20 and help make Rio+20 a success.

The conference is aimed at participants from European civil society associations, decision-makers, EU officials and public officials. After an introduction into the current state of the Rio+20 process the EESC conference will focus on the green economy as a means to enhance sustainable development within the limits of natural resources. The first general debate should tackle the European contribution to sustainability, while the second general debate will address sustainable development in non-EU countries. Subsequently four workshops will give the opportunity to deepen the discussion and elaborate conference conclusions:

- Food, water and energy for everyone
- Sustainable consumption and production
- A fair transition to a green economy – the social dimension
- Involving civil society in the transition to a green economy

Invited speakers are high-level representatives from the UN, the European Commission, internationally recognised speakers from the development and environment sector as well as from businesses and trade unions.

The EESC in its capacity as a channel for organized civil society in Europe has also been playing an active part in the establishment of the EU contributions to Rio+20. It held hearings in 2010 and 2011 to help identify the aspirations of civil society for the Summit, and produced two opinions on the Summit and the European approach to it in 2010 and 2011

Link: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-civil-society-rio20>