

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES IN THE 27 EU MEMBER STATES¹

(Unofficial document)

The national appointment procedures by the 27 EU Member States of the EESC members have been pointed out as a source of criticism of this European body. The fact that it is a deep-rooted practice and an exclusive prerogative of the Member States makes it more difficult to adapt its composition to socio-economic changes. The exclusive competence of national authorities to designate EESC Members and the formal acceptance of those designations by the Council is frequently criticised by European networks and other civil society organizations at national level.

One of the objectives of this document is to give an overview on the procedures and criteria applied by each Member State to identify and appoint their representatives to the Committee and to shed light on the differences between the selection procedures applied. This information may be used by European and national stakeholders to confront with the economic and social reality that is to be represented in the European Economic and Social Committee.

In most countries and generally speaking, it is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs that is responsible for preparing the list of candidates and for arranging prior consultations with the representative organisations. But ultimately, it is usually the responsibility of the Head of Government to approve the final list drawn up, after comparing the merits of each of the candidates.

In practice, selection and nomination procedures and processes are diversified and a big variety of actors is involved. The more concise and systematic analysis of those procedures and processes is a study conducted by Wim van der Voort in 1997, who created a matrix of four different types of procedures referring to the responsibility for interest selection and nomination:

1) *Heads of State / Government*

A nomination procedure in which the Head of State or central government holds the main responsibility; procedures with a central position for heads of State or central governments are found in member States with a strong tradition of *étatisme* and centralism.

Countries: France, Greece, Luxembourg

2) *Departments / individual ministers*

¹ This document reflects the situation that prevailed in 2006. Some changes within the nomination procedures might have occurred since then.

A nomination procedure in which the responsibility accrues to one or few government departments. It is not the responsibility of the government as a whole.

Countries: Germany, Denmark, UK, Ireland

3) *Government and specific departments*

A nomination procedure with elements from the first two nomination procedures: the procedure involves both the government and individual departments. However departments are involved without any decision-making authority.

Countries: Italy, Spain

4) *Corporatist bodies*

A nomination procedure in which the responsibility has been delegated to the national corporatist bodies. The delegation of the nomination responsibilities to corporatist bodies is not necessarily equal to a transition of authority to these bodies.

Countries: Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal.

Austria

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the pre-established civil society organisations select (their) candidates; the Federal Government formally nominates.

Description of the appointment process: highly organised process and unchanged since Austria's accession to the EU. The national system of social concertation - "Sozialpartnerschaft" - that represents the main civil society groups and interests in Austria stands behind the nominations to the EESC. The institutions taken part in the "Sozialpartnerschaft" that are asked by the Federal Chancellery to present their candidates for the Austrian 12 members are:

- a) WKÖ (Federal Economic Chamber) 3 seats
- b) ÖGB (Trade Union Confederation) 3 seats
- c) BAK (Federal Chamber of Labour) 2 seats
- d) LKÖ (Chamber of Agriculture) 1 seat
- e) Raiffeisenverband (Agricultural cooperatives) 1 seat
- f) VKI (Consumer Protection Organization) 1 seat
- g) Free Professions 1 seat

The names of the candidates are then sent to the Chancellery - that must inform the National and Federal Councils (*Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*) - who approves it.

Selection criteria: the only know criterion regarding the candidates, a part from membership in the above-mentioned organisations, is the one followed by the trade union (ÖGB) on the distribution of

its three seats: one mandate is nominated by the confederation and the other two are nominated by the two largest ÖGB affiliates - the metal working union and the white collar workers union.

Belgium

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Central Economic Council and the National Labour Council select the candidates; the Minister of Labour and Minister of Economy approve them and sent the list to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be sent to the European Council.

Description of the appointment process: the Belgian nomination process is mainly based on tradition and political consensus. The candidates are selected jointly by the Central Economic Council and the National Labour Council. These are advisory bodies with a specific vocation to contribute to elaborate positions and proposals related to economic life, welfare, competitiveness and labour relations and are granted by the Belgian Government with full autonomy and independence in designating the candidates. In this process, the Councils ensure that the different components and members of their respective organisations are duly represented.

The list of candidates goes to the Minister of Labour (related to the National Labour Council) and to the Minister of Economy (related to the Central Economic Council) for approval. And it is forwarded to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Selection criteria: membership in the organisations belonging to the Councils; candidates must be representative, legitimate, active and with influence in their socio-economic field.

Bulgaria

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the national Economic and Social Council selects; the Government officially nominates.

Description of the appointment process: taking on from the experience of other countries that proves that the participation of the national Economic and Social Councils (ESC) in the nomination procedure is an efficient way of establishing relationship and successful collaboration between the national ESCs on European level, the Bulgarian candidates are submitted by the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria. Each of the three Bulgarian ESC groups is entitled to have four representatives.

The list of nominees is submitted to the Government for official nomination.

Selection criteria: for the 2006/10 mandate no criteria are referred, apart from membership in the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria. Though the Bulgarian ESC decided that the future members of the EESC shall meet the following criteria:

1) Previous participation in committees, commissions and other forms of cooperation, established between Bulgaria and European institutions on economic and social issues;

- 2) Current membership in the ESC or in organisations that have nominated representatives in the ESC;
- 3) Awareness of the procedures and practices of the EESC;
- d. Experience in the area of social and civil dialogue and socio-economic issues;
- e. The organisations that submitted the nomination are supposed to be members of European organizations;
- f. Good command of English and/or French.

Cyprus

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: each of the pre-established organisations representing the different socio-economic categories appoints their candidate; the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance officially nominates them.

Description of the appointment process: like in Austria and Belgium, in Cyprus there is a long tradition of tripartite co-operation, therefore major decisions on labour and social issues are taken after consultations within the Labour Advisory Body (LAB) – a high level Committee chaired by the Minister of Labour and composed by the top representatives of the employers and workers organisations.

Before Cyprus' accession to the EU, in 2004, the LAB discussed on the Cypriot delegation in the EESC and decided that the following organisations would be represented:

- 1) *Employers Group:* The Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEB) and Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE);
- 2) *Employees' Group:* Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK) and Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO);
- 3) *Various Interests:* Cyprus Farmers Association (EKA) and Cyprus Consumers Association (KSK).

Each organisation nominates its candidate and sends its proposition to the Minister who formally appoints them.

Selection criteria: the criteria followed by the organisations involved, are mainly the suitability of the members and their ability to contribute constructively to the EESC deliberations.

Czech Republic

- *Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed:* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs starts the procedure; the national Economic and Social Council, the Governmental Council for NGOs and the ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport select and appoint the candidates.

The inter-ministerial Committee for EU Affairs decides and the Government officially nominates.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks for the proposals of the representative organisations of employers and workers present at the national economic and social council, of the Council of the Government for NGOs and of different ministries.

The nominations for the Groups I (employers) and II (workers) are submitted by the Working Team for EU affairs, one of the sections of the Council of Economic and Social Agreement (the national consultative body with representatives of the employers and workers organisations). The Government does not interfere in this selection.

The nominations for Group III are slightly different. One candidate is nominated by the Council for NGOs (which is a consultative body of the Government for the non-profit sector). The three other candidates are nominated by the competent Ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport after consultations with the competent organisations of the organised civil society in the area of their responsibility.

Upon the recommendations submitted by the respective Ministries, the Committee for the EU Affairs (an inter-ministerial body for coordination of the national positions towards the European Union) decides on the whole national delegation nominated to the EESC. The list of nominees is then submitted to the Government.

Selection criteria: no specific and written criteria for selection of the candidates.

Denmark

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Department for European Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of the formal appointment and nomination procedure of the organisations to be represented. The selected organisations appoint their nominees. The Parliamentary Committee on EU Affairs must be informed during the process.

Description of the appointment process: until 2006, the composition of the Danish delegation to the EESC has not changed, therefore the procedure was easy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Danish member organisations already in the EESC and asked for personal nominees for the new period of 4 years.

Though in 2007, consequently to the modifications introduced by the Nice Treaty, the Government and the parliamentary committee in charge of European affairs decided to make some changes and the Danish delegation is now composed by two new organisations.

The two new organisations were chosen following a public hearing of all interested parties, i.e. Danish civil society organisations. The Government has then decided on the organisations to be represented at the EESC and ask them to provide their personal nominees. The competent parliamentary committee was informed on the final list of nominees and the list sent to the EU Council.

Selection criteria: no information on overall application of criteria, only for the two new organisations. The main emphasis is on relevance for the work and areas covered by the EESC and

the widest possible representativeness regarding the main aspects dealt with by Danish civil society organisations.

Estonia

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: organisations are chosen by a Working Group coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Organisations decide on their candidates. Several Ministries are consulted on the list of candidates who are afterwards formally nominated by the Minister of Social Affairs. The final list of members is approved by the Government.

Description of the appointment process: before the Estonian accession to the EU, the Ministry of Social Affairs set up a Working Group chaired by the Minister himself and consisting of representatives of employers' and employees' umbrella organisations, of the major interest groups and of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications' representatives.

The aim of the working group was to work on a permanent nomination procedure and to settle the distribution of the seats between the three groups. Due to time constraints the procedure was not concluded. Though, it had to decide on the organisations to be represented in the Estonian delegation. It was established that six out of the seven Estonian members would come from the organisations that took part in the EESC-Estonia Consultative Committee. In what the seventh candidate is concerned, after some meetings with NGOs one association was chosen.

For the second mandate (2006/10) the seven Estonian members at the time, requested to the competent Ministry if their organisations could continue in office. After a meeting of the Working Group, the same organisations were re-nominated and asked to appoint their candidates. After the list was completed the Ministry of Social Affairs sent it to the other Ministries for approval. After the official consultation round the Government made the formal decision and sent it to the EU Council.

Selection criteria: the chosen organisations were well-established and representative of different areas of economic and social life. Preference was given to organisations dealing with highly relevant matters in Estonia. Having a well established umbrella organisation was considered as an asset. In addition, the working group took into account individuals' willingness and ability to participate in the Committee.

Finland

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: appointment of candidates for the Economic and Social Committee is decided by the Government at the Government's plenary session.

Description of the appointment process: the Prime Minister makes the proposal for appointing the candidates to the Government plenary. Usually the proposal is discussed by the EU Cabinet committee. It usually first prepares the request for various bodies to present candidates. Based on these proposals it then prepares the proposal to the Government plenary, taking into account the legislation on gender equality.

Selection criteria: gender equality.

France

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Employment coordinates the process; the SGAE (*Secrétariat Général aux affaires européennes*) – an interministerial structure dealing with EU affairs submits the list of candidates to the Prime Minister who has the final decision and responsibility for the nomination.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Employment assembles the candidatures of the employers' organisations and trade unions. The other candidatures (other candidates to Group I - Agriculture - and the Group III) are collected by the competent ministries after consultations with the socio-professional bodies. Traditionally, one representative of the Economic and Social Council of France is selected and the list of represented organisations reflects in a certain way the composition of the French EESC groups. All candidatures are submitted by the SGEA to the Prime Minister's final decision.

However it seems that the responsibility of deciding on the types of socio-economic interests to be represented was a prerogative of the President of the Republic.

Selection criteria: representativity of the civil society organisations; particular attention to gender balance.

Germany

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Federal Ministry of Economics coordinates the process; Federal Ministries of Economics and Technology, Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, Environment and Ministry for Women, Youth, Families and Elderly collect the representative organisations' selected candidates; the European department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanies the procedure. The final approval comes from the Federal Cabinet.

Description of the appointment process: several Federal Ministries are involved in the appointment procedure although the coordination is in the hands of the Ministry of Economics. The Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology is in charge of the candidatures coming from areas such as trade, industry, craftsmen; the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, of the trade unions and the ministries of Agriculture, Environment and for Women, Youth, Families and Elderly for the other areas, respecting the EESC division in three groups. The Federal Ministries refer to the different organisations for their nominees without interfering in their decisions. Subsequently, the names are submitted to the Federal Cabinet for consultation and approval.

Germany stands out as an example [of the procedure that involves one or more departments or ministers in drawing up the lists]. The nomination cedes to three departments of which the Department of Economic Affairs is most important. This department consults a stable group of organisations involving employers' organisations, trade unions, SME and consumers. The other two departments are Agricultural Affairs and since 1982 the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Selection criteria: no information.

Greece

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the responsible for the appointment is the Minister of Economy and Finance.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Economy and Finance asks the civil society organisations representing employers' organizations (for Group I), trade unions (for Group II) and professional, farmers, SMEs, consumers and other organisations (for the Group III), to put forward their proposals of members.

However, the Greek government makes a distinction between four categories of interests: employers, trade unions, sme and consumers. Within these categories, the Greek government requests organisations to put forward their nominees. The government then can reject or accept these nominees.

Selection criteria: experience in the sector they represent, the knowledge of foreign languages and their current position.

Hungary

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the process is organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment; the National Council for the Reconciliation of Interests nominates the members for Goup I and II; several Ministries are consulted to choose a list of candidates for Group III after a public tender.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment asked the National Council for the Reconciliation of Interests to nominate the members representing the employers and the workers. In what regards the "Various Interests" Group, the procedure was more complicated since civil society in Hungary was not well organised thus its representatives hard to choose. For this reason, the Ministry decided to make a tender for NGOs with three ladders. To apply the organisations had to fulfil specific criteria (see *infra*). The list of applicant NGOs was sent to all competent ministries asking them to score the organisations working within their jurisdiction. Based on the evaluation of the ministries, a list of twenty-five candidates was drafted. Finally, all candidates were interviewed by a committee made up of experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The interview was based in a scoring system, described below.

Selection criteria: the public tender launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs for the candidates to the III Group enclosed the following criteria:

- 1) the applicant's organisation has to work at national level;
- 2) the applicant's organisation has to work in areas pertaining to the sections of the EESC;
- 3) the applicant have to be competent and with great authority;
- 4) fluent knowledge of English or French (fluent knowledge of German, Italian, Spanish or other European language is advantageous);

5) good communication skills (practice of lobbying is advantageous).

The interviews conducted by the special evaluation committee respected a scoring system up to 20 points graduating items such as the nature of the candidate's organisation; the relation between the candidate's organisation working field and the EESC working issues; the candidate's profession, knowledge of foreign languages and communication skills.

Ireland

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Prime Minister's Office coordinates the process and officially appoints the candidates; the four pillars from the Social Partnership submit their candidates; the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs are consulted.

Description of the appointment process: in Ireland "Social Partnership" is composed by four pillars: Employers, Trade Unions, Agriculture, and Community & Voluntary. The Department of the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister), who is the link department between the Government and the Social Partners, invite each pillar to nominate three representatives. The Government gives three seats to the Employers, three to the Unions, two to Agriculture and one to the Community & Voluntary Pillar.

The employers' organisations and the trade unions are asked by the Government to submit six names each from which the Government chooses the appointees. The Government invariably chooses the top three names on the list. The distribution has followed the next distribution:

- 1) *Employers Group:* two seats to the Irish Business & Employers Confederation (IBEC) and one to the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland;
- 2) *Employees' Group:* one seat to the Irish Confederation of Trade Unions (SIPTU), one to the largest trade union (ICTU) and ITGWU (Irish Transport and General Workers Union).

There is always a nomination from Northern Ireland.

The Government directly nominates the "Various Interests" representatives as two seats are normally assigned to the two main farming organisations (Irish Farmers Association and Irish Creamery and Milk Suppliers Association) and one to the Voluntary organisations. The Government has absolute discretion in the selection but in practice the names put forward by the four pillars have always been respected.

Selection criteria: the Government's memorandum on the EESC nominations has a clause (art. 4) on gender balance and on the inclusion of a Northern Ireland member. In 2006 two out of the four pillars did not respect the gender balance claiming that the selected persons were "the most appropriate representatives with more experience, knowledge and time to contribute most effectively to the work of the EESC." (In *Nomination of Irish members to the European Economic and Social Committee*, Memorandum for the Government, Department of the *Taoiseach*, 18 July 2006, which describes the procedure to be followed).

Italy

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Minister of Economy and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs identify the representative organisations and ask them to provide their candidates; the Department of EU Affairs of the national Council of Ministers drafts the final list of nominees; the Council of Ministers approves it.

*Description of the appointment process*³⁴: the Italian Council of Ministers asks the Minister of Economy (competent in the areas of the productive activities) and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs to designate the organisations to Group I and II plus III, respectively presupposing that these ministries have the necessary data on the level of representativity of the civil society organisations according to their competency field. The identified organisations are then invited to submit their representatives and respective *curricula*. Each ministry prepares its list of selected candidates with the *curricula* and submit it to the department of European affairs of the Council of Ministers who approves it.

The excluded organisations may appeal to the Court. Indeed this has already happened in several occasions. The last incident was in 2006 when no consumers' organisation was designated to be represented in the Italian delegation.

Selection criteria: size and scope of the organisation's structure; number of members; effective participation in the activities pertaining to the activities listed in Article. 257 of the Nice Treaty; professional experience of the organisations appointee; language skills and suitability to the function.

Latvia

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating the selection process and the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Employers' Confederation and the Free Trade Union Confederation are in charge of nominating the candidates. The Senior Officials Committee for European Union issues (coordinating body among governmental institutions) is consulted on the list; the Cabinet of Ministers has the final word on the nomination.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requests the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia to nominate the candidates. Though, in order to ensure adequate representation of civil society, the institutions have to involve other interest groups and NGOs in the process of nominating the candidates.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs collects all nominations and drafts a list to be presented to the Senior Officials Committee which is called to give its advice and to send it to the Cabinet of Ministers. In case no agreement was reached in the Senior Officials Committee it is up to the Cabinet to decide on final contents of the list.

Selection criteria: even if there are no strictly defined criteria, the principle of well-balanced representation of interest groups (employers, employees and representatives of various interest

groups) has to be guarantee. The fact that the organisations, regardless of their working field, perform or not social activities may be used as a criterion for selection.

Lithuania

• *Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed*: the Ministry of Economy coordinates the process. The Tripartite Council, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Justice, the National Consumer Rights Protection Board under the Ministry of Justice, the European Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are consulted. The Government nominates the candidates.

Description of the appointment process: the Government, particularly the Ministry of Economy, selects the representative organisations. There are five representatives of the trade unions and five representatives of the employer's organisations present at the Tripartite Council. In what the third group is concerned, there are no nominees from NGOs representing the general interest only from consumers' organisations.

Each organisation sends its list of candidates, following their own criteria, to the Tripartite Council. Then the Council sends it to the Government with their comments. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Justice, the National Consumer Rights Protection Board, the European Law Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as other institutions and organisations are consulted. The Government takes the final decision.

N.B.: at the time of writing (2007), new rules and legislation were being prepared by the Ministry of Economy not only to include the organisations representing the "Various interests" in the consultation and nomination process, but also foreseeing selection criteria. It is not know whether these new rules are now in force.

Selection criteria: no criteria.

Luxembourg

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates; the identified organisations appoint the nominees and the Government confirms the nominations.

*Description of the appointment process*³⁶: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacts the relevant employers' and labour organisations asking them to submit their respective candidate. Currently these organisations are: the Chamber of Trade, the biggest trade unions - OGB-L, CGFP and LCGB, the Crafts Chamber and the Farmers' Association. They represent the largest organisations taking part at the national Economic and Social Committee. The Luxembourg government confirms the list of candidates.

Malta

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) coordinates the appointment procedures. The Prime Minister takes the final decision.

Description of the appointment process: the appointment procedure follows two stages. First, the Government asks the Social Partners and other civil society components to put forward their candidatures through the MCESD according to the Groups' distribution (2:2:1). The different employers and trade unions present at the Council and the Council's Civil Society Committee (since NGOs are not directly represented in the Council) agree on twice the number of required nominees. The Council sends the results to the Office of the Prime Minister who may then choose and propose the effective members of each group.

Selection criteria: no information.

The Netherlands

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Economic Affairs, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, starts up the procedure. The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER: *Sociaal Economische Raad*) coordinates the selection process. The Government officially nominates the nominees.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in accordance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asks the SER – the institution where the social partners meet to promote the public interest; one third of the seats is occupied by representatives of employers' organisations, one third by representatives of trade unions and one third by independent experts – to make its proposal. The SER first determines how the seats are to be divided among the various organisations active in the fields described in Article 257 of the European Treaty. Consequently, it establishes which specific organisations are entitled to propose one or more members. It collects each organisation's candidates and drafts its advice that is sent to the Government.

Selection criteria: no information

Poland

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy starts up and coordinates the procedure. The Tripartite Commission for Economic and Social Affairs and the Public Benefit Council coordinate the selection of the candidates. The National Parliament's Committee for EU Affairs must issue its opinion on the list of candidates. The Prime Minister approves the final list.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy starts up the selection procedure establishing deadlines for each stage. The distribution of seats follows the EESC division in three groups. The allocation of the workers and employers representatives' seats was agreed by the trade union organisations and employers' organisations represented in the Tripartite Commission for Economic and Social Affairs (the tripartite social dialogue body). The Public Benefit Council - where only registered organisations of public interest seat - decides on the distribution of seats for the third Group.

The employers' organisations and the trade unions send the names of their nominees to the Department of Dialogue and Social Partnership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Group III

nominations are sent by different NGOs to the Department of Public Interest also within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The Ministry of Labour is in charge of drafting the final list and sends it to the Polish Council of Ministers. In turn, the Cabinet submits the list of candidates to the National Parliament's Committee for EU Affairs. The Committee has 21 days to express its opinion. The list is then forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office. Both the Parliament's Committee and the Prime Minister may reject the list. However, this would mean the all process to be restarted as new consultations would have to be done.

Selection criteria: fluent knowledge of Polish; proved advanced knowledge of at least one foreign language (English, French or German); higher education (university level, M.A. or equivalent) and at least two-years' experience in organisations active in the social and economic spheres.

Portugal

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Prime Minister has the responsibility for the selection and official nomination of the Portuguese members. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the national Economic and Social Council and other civil society stakeholders are consulted on the list of candidates. The EU Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates the information flux between the EU Sub-Secretary of Foreign Affairs of that Ministry and the EU Department of the Prime Minister's Office.

Description of the appointment process: the selection and nomination process is coordinated by the EU Department of the Prime Minister's Office together with the EU Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Civil society organisations may present their candidates to the function of EESC member directly to the Prime Minister's Office or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or may be invited to do it. The competent Ministries, in particular the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the different sectors of civil society are consulted. The entire consultation and selection process is carried out in cooperation with the national Economic and Social Committee where the majority of the invited organisations seat. The final decision on the selected candidates is taken directly by the Prime Minister.

Selection criteria: more than criteria the Prime Minister's decision obeys to three principles – to assure the representation of the main social partners with acknowledged national representativity; the representation of the biggest number of relevant sectors within the socio-economical spheres according to the EU Treaty and the turnover of the organisations over the years.

Romania

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the European Affairs Secretariat of the Prime Minister Office coordinates the selection process. The organisations represented in the Economic

and Social Council of Romania (ESC) were asked to put forward their candidates. The Government appointed the members of the third group and approved the final list of candidates.

Description of the appointment process: the Government asked the Economic and Social Council to submit its proposals for the candidates representing the trade unions and the employers (other civil society organisations are not part of the ESC yet). Due to the fact that the Council had not started its new mandate, the Government made a direct request to the representatives of the trade unions and employers' confederations represented in the Council to present their candidates.

The Permanent Secretariat for European Affairs of the Prime Minister's Chancellery was in charge of coordinating the process, assembling the proposals and the candidates' CVs. These proposals were the result of an internal scrutiny of each institution: the candidates with more votes were designated. The Government did not interfere in the selection process. The representatives of the third group were directly appointed by the Government who also took the final decision on the complete list of candidates.

In the future, the Economic and Social Council will make proposals for the Romanian candidates for the 3rd group and will have a consultative role.

Selection criteria: personal competence and actual involvement in their specific field of activity and representativeness of the candidate's organisation within the Economic and Social Council of Romania. In what regards the third group, the social partners recommended that the nominees should represent five out of the six fields approved in the ESC' Plenary: academic and professional associations, consumer protection, human rights, health, social services, environment and rural middle-sized organisations.

Slovakia

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Government delegates the selection in two socio-economic bodies; the Ministry of Social Affairs drafts the list of candidates and the Government nominates the members.

Description of the appointment process: the Government asks two bodies to put forward their proposals: the "Triparta" (composed by Government's, employees' and employers' representatives) and the Economic and Social Council of Slovakia. Each institution sends its proposal to the Minister of Social Affairs who submits the final list to the Government.

Selection criteria: the Economic and Social council looks for a fair representation of the three socio-economic groups and takes into consideration the personal quality of the candidates.

Slovenia

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Government decides on the allocation of seats and takes the final decision on the nominees; the selected organisations appoint their candidates and the Government's Office for Foreign Affairs coordinates the procedure.

Description of the appointment process: the Government bearing in mind the EESC composition decided that for:

- 1) Group I - the Slovenian Economic and Social Council may submit two candidates;
- 2) Group II - the Slovenian Economic and Social Council may submit three candidates;
- 3) Group III - the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry may submit one candidate and the Centre of non-governmental organisations another one.

The three organisations have their own internal selection procedures and the Government does not interfere. They submit their candidates to the Government's Office for European Affairs who coordinates the procedure. The Government makes the official nomination.

Selection criteria: the only available information regards the Centre for NGOs procedures. The selection process has been tricky and highly discussed within the Centre as NGOs as some organisations do not agree with representativeness criteria. In any case the process is transparent and respects the principle of equal opportunities. The candidatures are submitted to internal voting and the recommended criteria are the personal skills and knowledge of the candidates.

Spain

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs coordinates the selection process; the organisations identified as the most representative appoint their nominees and the Government approves the final list. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Consumers is consulted.

Description of the appointment process: the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Secretaría General Técnica*) asks the more representative national and regional trade unions, employers' organisations to designate their candidates. In what concerns the third group the Ministry turns to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries that shall contact the most representative organisations within its scope of action. The Ministry of Social Affairs contacts directly the organisations of social economy (cooperatives), consumers and disable people to point out their nominees. The Ministry accepts the candidates and the list is then approved by the Government.

Selection criteria: each organisation selects their members according to internal criteria that do not have necessarily to follow a specific regulation. Though especially in what regards the trade unions these organisations are considered to be representative according to their number of affiliates and in order to be selected they have to be affiliated to the European Confederation of Trade Unions (ETUC).

Sweden

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the nomination of the Swedish representatives is the responsibility of the Ministry for Enterprise.

Description of the appointment process: the nomination procedure is initiated by the responsible official (in the last procedure the coordination laid in a Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications) who after consulting different Ministries decides on which organisations to invite to propose candidates to the EESC. The Swedish government tries to find representatives from those

organisations which are most involved or affected by EU regulations, and who are willing to nominate representatives and the decision has a sound political background.

The list of candidates is put together on the basis of the names given by each organisation. Once completed, the list is adopted by the Government.

Selection criteria: the organisations are chosen to reflect the areas of responsibility of the EESC and also the three groups within the Committee. The government also encourages gender equality, asking the interested organisations to take this aspect into account in their nominations. Though, there are no specific criteria set by the Government and is thus the responsibility of the organisations to propose suitable candidates.

United Kingdom

Institutions involved and responsibilities ascribed: the Foreign Secretary has overall responsibility for the selection and nomination of the UK delegation to the EESC and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) co-ordinates the procedure together with Department for Trade and Industry (DTI).

Description of the appointment process: due to the nature of the three EESC groups, the process was split between the FCO and the DTI. The FCO has responsibility for receiving and assessing applications for group III and the DTI looks after groups I and II. All Government departments and Devolved Administrations are asked to advertise for suitable applicants for the EESC. Some departments already have a list of interested candidates while some advertised in industry *media* or through stakeholder forums. There is an application form that has to be filled in by the candidates within an established deadline.

Afterwards a sifting panel made up of three officials assesses the applications against set criteria (*infra*). The two departments select the candidates and the nominations are considered by the European Policy Committee and agreed by the Foreign Secretary. Finally the list of nominated persons is granted final approval by the Prime Minister and a Parliamentary Written Statement is issued to inform the Parliament.

Selection criteria: the guidelines for applications, guidelines for the selection panel and the application form state as criteria:

- 1) relevant experience in the EESC areas [manufacturing industries; services sectors, including financial services, small business (of all types), research, innovation, new technologies, agriculture, public services, including transport, consumers interests, environment, youth issues; exclusion from the labour market, social exclusion, charitable interests, human resource experiences, including training and skills];
- 2) professional qualifications;
- 3) personal motivation;
- 4) any proven research and communication skills;
- 5) candidates need to have enough time available to prepare for and attend meetings;

6) candidates should be representative of the UK population, in what regards gender, ethnicity and disability;

7) familiarity with EU institutions and decision-making processes, knowledge of a foreign language and familiarity with basic IT applications are advantageous.

The selection process follows the “Guidance on Promoting Equality of Opportunity” in public appointments.