



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Meeting of the European Economic and Social Committee in Belfast City Hall

Date: 18 February 2014

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officers: Laura Leonard, EU Manager, ext 3577

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| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
| 1.1 | <p>The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body of the European Union. Committed to European integration, the EESC contributes to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the European Union by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level. This Committee fulfils three key missions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – helping to ensure that European policies and legislation tie in better with economic, social and civic circumstances on the ground, by assisting the European Parliament, Council and European Commission, making use of EESC members' experience and representativeness, dialogue and efforts to secure consensus serving the general interest; – promoting the development of a more participatory European Union which is more in touch with popular opinion, by acting as an institutional forum representing, informing, expressing the views of and securing dialogue with organised civil society; – promoting the values on which European integration is founded and advancing, in Europe and across the world, the cause of democracy and participatory democracy, as well as the role of civil society organisations. |
| 1.2 | The EESC has 353 Members. P The Members (also called Councillors) are drawn from economic and social interest groups in Europe. |
| 1.3 | Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable 5 year term of office. The latest renewal was in October 2010 for the mandate 2010-2015. |
| 1.4 | <p>Northern Ireland representatives on the EESC are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ms Jane Morrice - Communications Consultant and Director of Equality Commission – Mr Michael Smyth - University of Ulster Economist. |

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| 2 | Key Issues |
| 2.1 | The EESC enlarged Presidency, including the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Group Presidents and the Presidents of the sections of the European Economic and Social Committee have requested to hold a meeting in Belfast City Hall on 3 April and half day on 4 April 2014. |
| 2.2 | The EESC have general meetings outside of Brussels three times per year, and this year as one of their Vice Presidents, Janice Morrice, is from Northern Ireland, they have requested to host the meeting in Belfast City Hall. |
| 2.3 | The programme for the closed meeting is still being developed and it will be available at the end of February 2014. |
| 2.4 | While the Members are in Northern Ireland they will be following up on an EESC report from 2008 on the role of the EU in the NI Peace Process. |
| 2.5 | There will be approximately 30 Members for the closed meeting. |
| 2.6 | A reception by the Lord Mayor is requested to be hosted on 3 April 2014. Other guests from across the city will be invited with the purpose of welcoming the delegation to the city and hearing about the work of the EESC. |

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| 3 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | Members are asked to agree to pay for a reception for approximately 80 guests costing a maximum of £700. |
| 3.2 | All other costs including interpretation will be paid for by the EESC. |

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| 4 | Equality and Good Relations Considerations |
| 4.1 | There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report. |

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| 5 | Recommendations |
| 5.1 | It is recommended that Committee agree to pay for the reception in City Hall on 3 April 2014. |

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| 6 | Decision Tracking |
| Timeline: April 2014 | Reporting Officer: John McGrillen |