

**"Together to create new growth"**  
**"Social entrepreneurship & social economy: Developing a European ecosystem to unlock social innovation, growth and jobs"**

Conference on 18 November 2011 - Brussels

Speaker: Staffan Nilsson



Staffan Nilsson is President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the EU's only non-political advisory body. Based in Brussels, it enables civil society organisations across Europe to take part in the EU policy- and decision-making process. **"Engaging people for a sustainable Europe"** is Staffan Nilsson's political message for his term of office. Since 1995, when he became a member of the EESC, he has actively brought his expertise to bear on the work of the EESC, mainly in the fields of agriculture, sustainable development and international cooperation. Staffan coordinated the EESC's work on the Lisbon Strategy and later on the Europe 2020 strategy. He has been a farmer in northern Sweden for more than thirty years now and a long-standing leader in the Swedish Farmers' Federation (LRF) and in other associations in the field of education and culture, development and aid. He is a graduate of the University of Gothenburg, in Nordic Languages and History of Literature.

**ENGAGING PEOPLE FOR A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE**

As President of the EESC, Staffan Nilsson wants the Committee to continue its efforts to strengthen business models that can provide **a counterbalance** to the strict market model in order to realize social objectives.

The Commission recently invited the EESC to deliver an opinion on *social entrepreneurship & social enterprise* that was discussed and voted by a large majority in its last plenary session in October 2011.

In its recommendations, the Committee reiterates the need to **bridge the gap** between concepts that have been around for a very long time and seem irreconcilable. The EESC estimates that social entrepreneurship and social enterprises need to be stimulated. Europe must place social economy and social innovation **at the heart of its concerns**, in terms of territorial cohesion and in the search for new solutions to societal problems, in particular the fight against poverty and exclusion.

The EESC believes that the emergence of such enterprises is a **key tool** that could benefit the internal market and be a basis for growth that takes us out of the crisis. The opinion on social entrepreneurship will be discussed during the conference in Brussels on 18 November.