



EESC: 600th PLENARY SESSION – SÉAMUS BOLAND ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT

New term of office for Councillor Ulgiati

In the magnificent institutional setting of the European Parliament, the 600th Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was held in Brussels from 21 to 23 October, marking the start of a new five-year term (2025-2030). Séamus Boland was elected as the new President and Luigi Ulgiati was re-elected as Councillor, having been reappointed by the Council of the European Union to the prestigious European advisory body – initially on the proposal of the General Labour Union (UGL) and then by the Italian Government – to defend with passion and strength the rights and interests of workers, young people who are still unemployed and pensioners. On the 22nd of October, the members of the EESC Bureau and the new President, Séamus Boland, were elected with great solemnity, together with the two Vice-Presidents, the six Section Presidents and the President of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change. Subsequently, the agenda included a meeting of the Assembly, chaired by the newly elected President of the EESC, and the adoption of important Opinions by the Committee, all of which have as their common thread the defence of the most vulnerable, the protection of businesses, citizens and European workers, solidarity with peoples at war, declarations for inclusion against all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, the EESC constantly emphasises the crucial role that the Social Partners and civil society organisations of the candidate Countries and EU Member States play in the process of enlargement of the European Union. Their active participation is considered essential to support the transition of candidate Countries towards the fundamental values of the European Union: human rights, workers' rights, the rule of law and democracy. It is a pity, however, that this very value, democracy, is blatantly disregarded, contradicted and trampled on in the internal dynamics of an Institution – the EESC – which, evidently only in words, stands as the champion of all the Social Partners, recognising them as key players in promoting citizens' trust, the democratic nature of the Institutions and effective

social dialogue, but then in reality denies all this. The reference is to what happened, for the second time, to Councillor Luigi Ulgiati, who, despite meeting all the requirements for membership of "Group II Workers" as an Italian trade unionist with the General Labour Union (Deputy Secretary General of the UGL), was once again excluded from this natural and rightful membership, on entirely instrumental grounds, mainly put forward by fellow EESC members belonging to the Italian trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL. There is therefore a clear contradiction between the EESC as a whole and one of its representatives, who was legitimately appointed but deliberately excluded and discriminated against. The hope is that this ugly page written by the European Economic and Social Committee on the occasion of its five-year renewal will be erased by a great sense of responsibility on the part of all its members, so that the Opinions expressed by the EESC are not evanescent declarations of intent, valid only for the outside world, but instead find real substance, starting from within. Because credibility can only be achieved through consistency.



SPEECH BY COUNCILLOR ULGIATI AT THE PLENARY SESSION FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE

«Good morning everyone, thank you Mr President, my sincere congratulations on your election. With regard to my exclusion from Group II, I would not wish any of you to experience what I am going through, which is exclusion and discrimination. I belong to the UGL, an Italian trade union organisation that represents workers and signs National Collective Agreements. My only fault is that my organisation, the UGL, signed the National Collective Agreement for Riders five years ago, which is still the only regulatory instrument for their protection, but the other Italian trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL did not like it. One thing I am certain of is that I will not allow anyone to discriminate against me and make specious accusations to exclude me. I demand to be treated on an equal footing with other members and, to achieve this, I am prepared to take legal action at all levels, whether within the EESC, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament or the Italian Government. I do not want to be pitied, and I am tired of being treated differently from others. This is a battle for rights and democracy that I will fight to the end, and I hope to have your support. Thank you».