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THE EESC AND THE EUROPEAN NETWORKS PACKAGE

The European Union has one of the most extensive and resilient electricity networks in the world, covering over 11 million kilometres within the Internal Market and ensuring a daily supply of high-quality electricity to its consumers. At the same time, the European Union's electricity networks face new challenges relating to both the network's insufficient capacity to meet growing demand for connections, delays in project implementation, and security threats. In December 2025, the European Commission presented the "European Networks Package", which aims to strengthen and modernise European energy networks by enhancing cross-border planning and improving the integration of national energy network systems. In this context, during the recent March Plenary Session, the EESC (Europe-

an Economic and Social Committee) adopted the Opinion TEN/863 on European networks, emphasising the need for the EU to achieve greater energy decentralisation and better coordination of electricity networks, which should be rapidly digitised and aligned with national energy and climate plans. Councillor Ulgiati expressed his support for strengthening the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) – a key European Union funding instru-



ment designed to finance strategic infrastructure investments with the aim of improving connections between Member States to promote growth, employment and competitiveness – as the European Union's planning should be complemented by European funds. The EESC representative also highlighted the need for public co-financing to expand the network, including through Institutions such as the EIB, ensuring the creation of European value, the participation of SMEs and the timely implementation of projects. «All this must take place not only in compliance with labour law provisions laid down by European and national legislation - concluded Ulgiati - but also with collective bargaining agreements, whilst avoiding undue discrimination against certain types of businesses or certain Member States».

EU: BIOECONOMY STRATEGY

The bioeconomy encompasses activities that use biological resources to create added value. It encompasses products, services, science and technologies that benefit a range of sectors, from agriculture and forestry to fisheries and aquaculture. Through biomass processing, bio-manufacturing and biotechnology, the bioeconomy supports food, health, energy, industry and ecosystem services, representing the fastest-growing sector in the European Union. For this reason, the European Commission has adopted the new "Bioeconomy Strategy", a document marking a decisive step in the transition towards a clean, resilient and competitive European economy. The bioeconomy is recognised as one of the major strategic opportunities of the 21st century: a driver of green growth, innovation and self-sufficiency, capable of reducing dependence

on fossil fuel imports, as well as contributing to the EU's climate and environmental objectives. The recently published Strategy aims to make EU businesses more competitive and increase green jobs without harming nature, targeting European farmers, foresters, industries and businesses, particularly SMEs and start-ups in rural and coastal areas. It is based on four main objectives: 1) making bio-based innovations a reality, moving



them from the laboratory to the market; 2) developing lead markets for bio-based materials and technologies such as fibres and textiles, chemicals, fertilisers and construction materials; 3) ensuring the sustainable use of biomass by making use of agricultural residues and organic waste; 4) capitalising on global opportunities by strengthening the EU's position through international partnerships capable of reducing vulnerability in a fragile geopolitical context. In conclusion, a European Strategy for the Bioeconomy that is not merely an industrial plan, but a long-term vision that intertwines competitiveness, sustainability and resilience, positioning the European Union to lead the global transition towards a decarbonised, circular and innovative economy, capable of combining economic growth, employment and environmental protection.