

News from EUROPE

Edited by Luigi Ulgiati, UGL Deputy Secretary, member of the EESC N. 194 9th of November 2026

EESC: ULGIATI ATTENDS TEN SECTION MEETING IN BRUSSELS

On the 5th of November, a meeting of the Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (TEN) Section of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) took place in the Belgian Capital, attended by Councillor Ulgiati. During the meeting, three debates were held on very important topics. The first was on "How can Europe keep aviation competitive, resilient and fit for the future?", relating to the review of the Airport Package and the ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation. The second concerned the nuclear fuel cycle, with discussions on how waste management must be not only technical, but also ethical and social. The third debate centred on the European Commission's New Hydrogen Strategy; in this regard, the Commission launched a four-week consultation on the 26th of October – open until 23rd of November – aimed at gathering contributions and information to help shape the forthcoming hydrogen strategy. Aimed at both stakeholders and the general public, this consultation seeks to provide input on the scope and content of the strategy, which will then be incorporated into the Commission's drafting of the document. According to Ulgiati «The update to the 2020 hydrogen strategy has become necessary in light of delays in market development and high production costs. Since then, in fact, a number of factors have slowed its momentum: two wars and the binding targets for renewable fuels of non-biological origin (RFNBO), introduced by the RED III Directive, which make it very difficult to meet the 2020 targets. Furthermore, electricity also weighs heavily on costs; its supply, net of grid tariffs, can account for up to 50 per cent of the cost of producing renewable hydrogen. The review – Ulgiati concluded – therefore aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the supply chain, accelerate investment and tackle the challenges relating to demand, infrastructure and imports».





EU: NEW SOCIAL SECURITY RULES

Each Country in the European Union is free to determine the characteristics of its own social security system, including the types of benefits provided, eligibility requirements, how benefits are calculated, and the contributions to be paid. At the same time, around 16 million European citizens live or work in another EU Country. The European Union establishes rules to coordinate national social security systems and ensure social protection when a person moves within EU Member States, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Since 2010, this coordination framework has been governed by Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009, which were subsequently revised to reflect changes in the labour market and in national social security systems. This update follows nearly a decade of negotiations between the co-legislators and the Commission. On the 1st of November, the Regulation revising the EU rules on the coordination of national social security systems came into force, although, to allow Member States time to adapt their national procedures, most of the new rules will only apply from 1st of November 2028. The reform addresses five key areas. The first is the protection of those working or living abroad, with the introduction of new rules on family benefits; the second concerns worker mobility and includes a new definition of fraud in the coordination of social security. The third area relates to unemployment benefits, with the extension of the period during which a person may move to another Country to look for work whilst retaining their entitlement to benefits. The fourth area concerns clearer rules for determining which social legislation applies, particularly in the case of postings and work carried out in two or more Member States, whilst the fifth provides for the strengthening of administrative cooperation between national authorities through improved information exchange.