L'avenir est entre vos mains

Contribution citoyenne à la Conférence sur l’avenir de l’Europe

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Introduction

The Conference on the Future of Europe is an unprecedented exercise in citizen participation, providing an opportunity to consult the citizens of the 27 Member States of the European Union in order to put them back at the centre of the decisions being made for the years and decades to come. In this way, EU citizens are invited to make their voices heard, by proposing changes and specific actions that will enable Europe to define a new ambition and address the global challenges it faces today.

The French government supports the initiatives of the three-presidency team of the Conference on the Future of Europe, in particular by encouraging its citizens to make a substantial contribution to the online platform and to organise events throughout the country.

In parallel with these European initiatives, the government wanted to carry out a participatory exercise at national level.

With the support of the Ministry with responsibility for Relations with Parliament and Citizen Participation (MRPC) and the expertise of the Interministerial Centre for Citizen Participation (CIPC), the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) organised a citizen-focused exercise based on strong methodological approaches (see ‘Commitments and methodological approaches’ below). To implement the programme, the MEAE used a consortium comprised of Roland Berger, Wavestone, Missions Publiques and Harris Interactive. The regional prefectures also played a key role in organising the 18 conferences throughout the country.

The participants in the consultation were asked a single question: ‘As French citizens, what changes do you want for Europe?’ (see Annex IV ‘Mandate for participation’).
This national exercise took the form of 18 regional conferences in the 13 metropolitan regions and the five French overseas regions, held over three weekends in September and October 2021 and each involving between 30 and 50 randomly selected citizens (746 in total). A summary of these 18 regional panels was then produced at a national conference held on 15 to 17 October 2021 at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) in Paris, involving 98 volunteers from among the citizens who had participated in the regional conferences.

In addition, in order to highlight the views of young French people ahead of the European Year of Youth in 2022, an online consultation entitled ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ (‘Young People Have Their Say’) was organised by the MEAE in partnership with Make.org. More than 50 000 young people aged 15 to 35 shared their ideas and priorities for Europe in 2035.

This report sets out the main results of the two consultations carried out by the government.

**Methodology of the consultation**

The recruitment of citizens to take part in the regional conferences combined a random selection of participants by drawing lots from their telephone numbers, and targeted selection from among certain groups in order to ensure the panel was as representative as possible of the diversity of each area.

At the regional panels, the participants shared their views by alternating group work, with tables of six to eight citizens assisted by a facilitator, and presentations in plenary. Experts were present during the discussion time to answer citizens’ questions and provide clarification, while making sure to maintain a neutral stance.
Citizens were first invited to discuss their current perception of Europe. They then shared their aspirations for Europe in 2035, in their groups and afterwards in plenary. These discussions made it possible to identify between three and eight aspirations per region. For each of these aspirations, the citizens then outlined the changes that they thought were needed to achieve this vision for Europe, accompanied by specific proposals to be implemented. The process resulted in a total of 515 changes and 1,301 specific proposals at national level.

A regional summary report was produced for each regional conference and provided to all participants ahead of the national conference.

The national summary conference involved 98 citizens drawn by lot from among the participants in the 18 regional conferences. In order to ensure diversity on the national panel, six citizens were drawn by lot from among the volunteers from the regional conferences in metropolitan France and Réunion, and four citizens from the overseas conferences, with each regional draw making sure to maintain a gender balance and include a range of ages (see Annex II).

In preparation for the national conference, the 515 changes identified at the regional conferences were analysed and combined when the underlying intention appeared to be similar or related, so as to form 14 groups of changes reflecting a common aspiration for Europe (see part 6). These 14 aspirations for Europe served as the basis for the work of the 98 participants in the national conference, whose task was to build on the work done in the regions and compare the aspirations for Europe, the changes and the proposals with the help of some twenty experts, in order to arrive at a list of priority changes. Finally, each group selected three key changes, the first of which was voted on by all 98 citizens, establishing a final ranking of the 14 priority changes. A summary report consolidates all of the work done at this conference.
The online consultation for young people (‘Parole aux Jeunes’) took place from May to July 2021 with the support of Make.org. More than 50,000 participants took part and submitted almost 3,000 proposals for Europe. Based on all the young citizens’ reactions, 35 main ideas were identified, of which 22 were widely favoured and 13 gave rise to controversy among the participants (see Part 11 below).

**Starting point and duty to follow up**

This report will be submitted to the Government by the citizens on 29 November 2021, in the presence of the French elected representatives who are members of the Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It will be submitted to the three-presidency team of the Conference during the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

At the end of the national synthesis conference at the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC), and in order to meet the high expectations of the randomly selected citizens, a citizens’ follow-up committee was set up to represent the participants’ right to follow up. This committee, composed of 15 members — 14 representatives of the regional conferences and one representative of the ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ consultation — will be tasked with informing citizens about the outcome of their proposals. At each meeting of the Conference Plenary, one or more of the members of the Follow-up Committee will participate as a representative of the French exercise to highlight the proposals set out in this report, while building a common position with all the European citizens represented.

All of the documents from the French consultation — mandate for participation, regional summaries, national summary, guarantors’ report and final report — will be public and accessible to everyone on the French State’s platform for citizen participation:
Presentation of the main results

Overview of the French contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe

Citizens drawn by lot were asked the question:
‘As French citizens, what changes do you want for Europe?’

TOP 10 PRIORITY CHANGES FOR EUROPE IN 2035

1. Encourage **energy restraint**, consuming less and eliminating excess

2. Strengthen the European Union’s **common defence and security**

3. Promote **collective economic performance** through autonomous, competitive industry developed and promoted by the EU

4. Establish **citizen power** at several levels: participation, decision-making, control

5. Move towards a **federation of European states** with strong powers in common areas of interest

6. Offer **exchange programmes** at all stages of life

*Source: Changes that received the most votes at the national conference on the future of Europe (13-17 October 2021).*
7. Share European cultures through gatherings and events that bring people together

8. Harmonise healthcare and make it accessible to all Europeans through a common healthcare policy

9. Develop and oversee strategic sectors at European level to ensure our sovereignty

10. Improve the protection of ecosystems and environments and create protected areas at the heart of urban, peri-urban and rural areas

‘Young People Have Their Say’ online consultation

On 9 May 2021, the Minister of State with responsibility for European Affairs launched a consultation called ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ (‘Young People Have Their Say’), conducted by Make.org, which ran from May to July 2021.

50 000 young people aged 15 to 30 responded to the question: ‘What are your priorities for the Europe of tomorrow?’, submitting 2 916 proposals.

The most popular ideas among the young French people who took part in this online consultation were included in France’s contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe (see part 11 of the report for more details).
Presentation of the regional conference panels

A diverse panel of 746 citizens

Overview of the participants in the 18 regional conferences

60% 40%

-aged 18-24
-aged 25-34
-aged 35-49
-aged 50-64
-aged 65+

10% 15% 28% 29% 18%

Farmers and growers
Skilled workers - Retailers - Entrepreneurs
Executives - Service professionals
Associate professionals
Office staff
Manual workers
Retirees
Other unemployed

1% 6% 20% 26% 10% 5% 20% 11%
Conferences on the future of Europe all over France

18 regional conferences, 13 in metropolitan France and 5 in overseas regions
Commitments and methodological approach
The State’s commitments

1. Transparency
2. Neutrality
3. Duty to follow up

Methodological approaches

Territorialisation and proximity to citizens
- Consultations organised in 13 metropolitan regions and 5 overseas regions
- A national summary conference

Diversity and random selection
- Participants randomly selected on the basis of phone numbers
- Representative panels reflecting the diversity of the population and perspectives on Europe

Transparency of the process
- Supervision by a panel of 3 guarantors
- All summary documents published online

Open discussion with no fixed agenda
- Citizens given free rein on the topics discussed
- No set framework for discussion

Reverse expertise
- No prior information provided
- Group discussion based on citizens’ experiences and opinions, with expertise provided at citizens’ request

Collegiality and responsive governance
- Weekly governance with all relevant parties

Duty to follow up
- Establishment of a citizens’ follow-up committee
- Commitment by the government to be the voice of the citizens in the European exercise
a. State commitments on participatory democracy

The French component of the Conference on the Future of Europe is underpinned by the commitments the State has signed up to on participatory democracy, which are based on three principles: transparency, neutrality and the duty to follow up.

A participatory approach requires the organiser to adhere to a rigorous methodology. The method of citizen participation should enable citizens to participate under the best possible conditions and to express their views in a free and reasoned manner.

Transparency

The team organising the conference undertook to make all the information relating to the consultation — listed below — accessible to citizens:

- The framework for consultation;
- The commitments made vis-à-vis citizens;
- The purposes of the consultation;
- The results of the consultation.

The methodology of the Conference on the Future of Europe was thus established with the constant objective of ensuring transparency for citizens. The methodology for recruiting randomly selected citizens, the methodological approach and the handling of citizens’ views were clearly set out. Participants also received a summary of their regional conference by email at the end of the conference. In addition, all working documents and proceedings will be made public at the end of the forum on the State Citizen Participation Platform¹.

¹ www.participation-citoyenne.gouv.fr
Neutrality

During a consultation, the organising team must ensure it remains neutral when facilitating exchanges and drafting summaries of the results. Stakeholders — moderators, facilitators, experts — should not express their own views or try to steer the debate in a subjective way.

The objective of neutrality was pursued at all preparatory stages of this consultation, for instance by ensuring absence of bias in selecting participants, total freedom of expression during discussions, and citizens’ input being free of influence from the sponsor or stakeholders. This need for neutrality was reflected in an objective and transparent process to recruit participants, consistent methodological approach (reverse expertise, no thematic framework for debates) with special attention being paid to the attitude of the various stakeholders (moderators, facilitators, experts). Lastly, the organising team made sure that all contributions were taken into account and that there was no screening of citizens’ proposals.

A panel of 3 guarantors, appointed by the Presidents of the National Assembly and the European Parliament and by the Government, also ensured that all opinions expressed were respected and taken into account.

Duty to follow up

Citizens, irrespective of whether or not they participated in the consultation, have the right to be informed of what has been adopted from their proposals and their opinions, and for what reasons. This is known as the duty to follow up.
It is defined by the Interministerial Centre for Citizen Participation (CIPC) and the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) as the public decision-maker’s commitment to provide citizens with a clear and comprehensible response to the planned follow-up to the consultation. In practical terms, the duty to follow up means providing feedback to citizens to explain how their contributions are taken into account and have an impact on the administration’s decisions and practices.

The Government took up this duty to follow up at the Conference on the Future of Europe and announced an ambitious follow-up mechanism at the end of the national conference; this is described in the following section of this report (see ‘Methodological approach’).
b. Methodological approaches

These three State commitments were reflected in the consultation methodology in the form of seven strongly-focused methodological approaches.

1. Territorialisation and proximity to citizens

The national component of the Conference on the Future of Europe took the form of 18 regional conferences, in the 13 metropolitan regions and the five French overseas regions, followed by a national conference in Paris. The aim of organising these panels at local level was to be as close to citizens as possible to gather their views. This approach also enriched the consultation by revealing the lines of consensus and disagreement among the regions on different issues.

2. Diversity of citizen profiles and random selection

A recruitment target of 50 citizens per regional conference was set ahead of the process, with the exception of the overseas conferences of Martinique, Mayotte, Guadeloupe and Guyana, for which the target was 30 to 40 citizens, and the conference of the Grand Est region, at which five German citizens from the three bordering Länder were also present. The citizens invited to participate in the regional conferences were drawn by lot through random selection of telephone numbers.

In order to be eligible, the randomly selected citizens had to be over 18 and either French or permanent legal residents in France. Each regional citizens’ panel needed to be representative of the diversity of the regional population and to bring together a variety of views on Europe. The details of the methodology used for the recruitment by random selection are set out in Annex II.

3. Transparency of the process

A panel of three guarantors, appointed by the Minister of State for European Affairs, the President of the National Assembly and the President of the European Parliament, monitored the entire process to ensure that it was neutral and conducted properly. In particular, the guarantors: verified that citizens were genuinely being recruited by random selection; made recommendations regarding the choice of experts; and ensured, through on-the-spot visits, that the discussions were being conducted well. At the end of the programme, the guarantors will publish their opinion on the consultation. This document will be made available online on the state citizen participation platform.

The following will also be published on the State citizen participation platform: summaries of the 18 regional conferences; the document summarising all of the changes outlined during the regional conferences; the summary of the national conference; and lastly the final report submitted to the government.
4. An open discussion with no fixed agenda

A single question was put to the citizens participating in the national consultation: ‘As French citizens, what changes do you want for Europe?’. The approach taken and the methodology put in place allowed citizens to decide for themselves on tabling the desired changes, without being constrained by a specific subject or a predetermined normative framework.

The aim was to thus allow the citizens at the regional conferences to enjoy total freedom as regards the subjects they wished to discuss. For the national component of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the MEAE therefore chose to develop an approach that would complement the European exercise, which is structured around nine topics: climate change and the environment; health; a stronger economy, social justice and jobs; EU in the world; values and rights, rule of law, security; digital transformation; European democracy; migration; education, culture, youth and sport; other ideas.

The discussion topics for the regional conferences were therefore determined by the citizens themselves, not by the sponsor of the exercise.

5. Reverse expertise

In order to minimise any influence on participants in the process of identifying their aspirations for Europe, the decision was made not to provide any information or expertise in advance (for example, on the current EU project, its competencies or the functioning of the institutions), but to take questions raised by the citizens themselves as the starting point. This methodological approach is based on the principle of ‘reverse expertise’, according to which collective reflection takes place on the basis of the experiences and opinions of citizens, who then question experts in order to support their discussions and consolidate their working hypotheses.

To achieve this objective, experts were mobilised in the various regions (three, on average), including from academia and from the Europe Direct Information Centres in the areas concerned. They were present on the Saturday and Sunday of each weekend to answer citizens’ questions, speaking only at their request. Fact-checkers were also contactable to quickly check any factual questions from citizens.

During the national summary conference at the CESE, 19 high-level experts from academia, think-tanks and the diplomatic corps were present in the working groups. These experts each accompanied a group throughout the weekend, allowing them to examine the changes outlined by the regions in more depth.

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6. **Collegiality and responsive governance**

The whole process was co-developed by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), supported by the participative strategy of the Interministerial Centre for Citizen Participation (CIPC) within the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) and the Ministry with responsibility for Relations with Parliament and Citizen Participation (MRPC). The process was implemented by a consortium comprised of Roland Berger, Wavestone, Missions Publiques and Harris Interactive, which was responsible for steering the process, organising the conferences, drawing lots to select the citizens, and drafting the reports and summaries, working together with the regional prefectures on the local arrangements for the regional conferences.

**Specific governance** was put in place in the form of a project team headed by the MEAE and comprising the CIPC, the MRPC and the consortium.

7. **Duty to follow up and link with the European exercise**

At the national conference, it was announced that there were several components of the French institutions’ duty to follow up once the exercise for the Conference on the Future of Europe had been conducted, including:

- publishing all the information on the process, this document, and the summary reports from the regional and national conferences, in a transparent and fully accessible manner, on the new citizen participation platform launched upon presentation of the final report to the government;
- organising an event to present the government with the final report from the national component of the Conference on the Future of Europe in November 2021;
- establishing a citizens’ follow-up committee to ensure that the proposals made during the process are followed up. This committee will be made up of 15 citizens, including 14 participants from the regional conferences and one participant in the ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ online consultation;
- submitting the French contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe to the European institutions in January 2022.
The French citizens’ proposals will be put forward for discussion by all the Member States and the European institutions. As the country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022, it will be incumbent on France to be the voice of its citizens while also seeking to establish a common European position.
Part 1: presentation of the outcome of the regional conferences on the future of Europe

At each of the 18 regional conferences, citizens described their aspirations for Europe in 2035, individually and then in groups. Three to eight groups of aspirations emerged in each region, totalling **101 visions for Europe across the whole of France**. The citizens then outlined changes that they thought were needed to achieve this vision for Europe, accompanied by specific actions. The process resulted in a total of **515 changes** and **1,301 specific actions** for the whole of France.

In the weeks between the regional conferences and the national conference, the project team worked on arranging the 515 changes into cohesive groups. All of the changes put forward by the regions were subject to a lexicological analysis, and combined when the underlying intention seemed similar or related, so that working groups with a common aspiration for Europe could be established for the national conference. Finally, the changes identified by the regions were grouped into **14 separate aspirations for Europe**.
(a) Ranking of the 14 aspirations for Europe

At the end of each regional conference, the participating citizens voted to express their support for the changes identified by the different working groups.

On the basis of the groups established prior to the national summary conference, it was possible to determine – as a result of the votes on the changes in each region – which aspirations for Europe were the most popular among the citizens. For example, ‘a Europe which puts education at the forefront’ and ‘a closer and more accessible Europe’ were widely favoured, with changes that were supported by an average of 56% of citizens at the regional conferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirations for Europe ranked by popularity</th>
<th>What are the changes you would like to see implemented?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A Europe which puts education at the forefront</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A closer and more accessible Europe</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A Europe with shared cultures and identities</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A Europe committed to tackling the environmental and climate challenge</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A more united Europe</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A Europe of solidarity which protects</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A Europe which guarantees respect for fundamental rights</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A competitive and innovative Europe</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A Europe which promotes sustainable development</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A more democratic Europe</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A Europe with more efficient governance</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. A Europe which defends its interests</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. A powerful Europe in the world</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. A Europe where the interests of each state take priority</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) Presentation of the 14 priority changes from the national conference

At the national summary conference, the 100 citizens taking part each worked on one of the 14 groups of aspirations. At the end of the discussions, each group selected **one priority change to be made by 2035** which reflected their aspiration for Europe. The 14 priority changes were then voted on by the 100 citizens on the last day of the national conference. The result of the vote is set out below, in descending order of the number of votes received for each change.

The most popular change among the 100 citizens at the national conference was ‘Encourage energy restraint, consuming less and eliminating excess’.

| 1 | Encourage energy restraint, consuming less and eliminating excess |
| 2 | Strengthen the European Union’s common defence and security |
| 3 | Promote collective economic performance through autonomous, competitive industry developed and promoted by the EU |
| 4 | Establish citizen power at several levels: participation, decision-making, control |
| 5 | Move towards a federation of European states with strong powers in common areas of interest |
| 6 | Offer exchange programmes at all stages of life |
| 7 | Share European cultures through gatherings and events that bring people together |
| 8 | Harmonise healthcare and make it accessible to all Europeans through a common healthcare policy |
| 9 | Develop and oversee strategic sectors at European level to ensure our sovereignty |
| 10 | Improve the protection of ecosystems and environments and create protected areas at the heart of urban, peri-urban and rural areas |
| 11 | Set up local European contact points to consult with and advise citizens |
| 12 | Standardise elections to the European Parliament in the 27 Member States and bring the EU closer to citizens by replacing the current voting method with uninominal voting at regional level |
| 13 | Establish a common policy to offer a better reception to and improve the social and professional integration of migrants (including irregular migrants) |
| 14 | Preserve the specific characteristics (food labels, craft products, traditions) of the different European regions to prevent the homogenisation of ways of life and ensure product traceability and quality |
For each priority change, the citizens of the group concerned gave a definition of the change, proposed specific actions to implement that change and set out the criteria for success by 2035.
Change 1 – Promote energy restraint, consuming less and eliminating excess

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe committed to tackling the environmental and climate challenge

What does this change cover?

**Key words:** Development of renewable energy sources, reduction in energy consumption

The aim of this change is to encourage a reduction in energy consumption in Europe and the development of renewable energies. Its prioritisation by citizens expresses their desire for Europe and its inhabitants to take **resolute action** in the face of the environmental and climate challenge.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

This change consists in the development of ambitious **research programmes** on renewable energy sources and the **deployment of European investment funds** taking direct shareholdings in companies in the sector.

For citizens, this change would be successful if it resulted in **binding targets** for lower energy consumption and **key indicators of moderation**, such as a reduction in the EU car fleet or in meat consumption. The ambition is also to successfully establish **consumption quotas per sector**, taking account of fluctuations in the consumption of businesses and respecting the confidentiality of their data.
Change 2 – Strengthen the European Union’s common defence and security

Associated aspiration for Europe: A powerful Europe in the world

What does this change cover?

**Key words: European army, strategic autonomy**

This change is in line with citizens’ unanimous desire to achieve autonomy in the area of defence and security in Europe, so as not to depend on foreign powers.

**What are the key stages and criteria for success?**

For citizens, the success of this change would be reflected above all in the appointment of a European Commissioner for Defence and Security.

In the field of defence, the creation of a permanent army, which is responsive and can be deployed throughout the world, would enable Europe to protect its borders and intervene, if necessary, at the request of third countries.

As regards security, citizens consider that Europe should guarantee security of supply and protect its strategic research, in priority sectors such as the space sector, cybersecurity, the medical sector and the environment. Better protection of the external borders should also help to curb illegal immigration and trafficking.
Change 3 – Promote collective economic performance through autonomous, competitive industry developed and promoted by the EU

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe which defends its interests

What does this change cover?

Key words: European preference, protection of know-how, development of European champions

This change aims to achieve three objectives: strengthening a policy of a ‘European preference’ within the Union, ensuring the protection of essential goods and know-how, and creating ‘European champions’.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

Achieving these objectives, first of all, means implementing a policy of a ‘European preference’ in the context of calls for tender, and the introduction of a carbon tax on imports.

The protection of know-how would result in increased control of takeovers and foreign investment, and the expansion of relocation aid.

Finally, the creation of ‘European champions’ means encouraging European industrial alliances in strategic sectors and boosting public venture capital investment.

Citizens see the criteria for the success of this change as the development of European industrial alliances in key sectors, increasing the number of business relocations and improving Europe’s trade balance.
Change 4 – Establish citizen power at several levels: participation, decision-making, control.

Associated aspiration for Europe: A more democratic Europe

What does this change cover?

**Key words:** increase voter turnout, a European satisfaction barometer, mainstream citizen consultations

Through this change, citizens propose to develop a ‘full civic experience’ for Europeans, by increasing their involvement at all stages of the decision-making process. This change reflects citizens’ desire to make their voices heard and to influence public policies affecting their daily lives.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

For citizens, the main task is to develop and perpetuate citizens’ participation initiatives. To this end, action can be taken on several fronts: the constitution of a permanent consultative assembly, enshrining citizen power in the European treaties and the creation of a label certifying laws which have emerged from citizen consultation.

The criteria for the success of this change would be upward movement in indicators such as voter turnout, interest and trust expressed in the European Union and the use of European websites. An increase in the number of decisions taken following a citizens’ consultation and the increased use of European Citizens’ Initiatives (ECIs) also emerge as hallmarks of success.
Change 5 – Move towards a federation of European states with strong powers in common areas of interest

Associated aspiration for Europe: a more united Europe

What does this change cover?

**Key words:** unified institutions, elected President, strengthening EU competences

This change reflects the desire of our citizens to **unify** European political institutions. Envisaged is a federation of states with the aim of **strengthening** the shared or exclusive **competences** of the European Union, without, however, moving towards a federal state.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

Internally, this change could involve increasing **civic participation**, creating **European ministries** within the Member States and, in the longer term, **electing** the President of the European Commission by **universal suffrage**.

Externally, the strengthening of Europe's voice abroad would be **embodied** by a **single representative of Europe** on the global stage.

This federation of states would also benefit from an increased **European budget**, with the aim to reach 10% of GDP (currently 2%).
Change 6 – Offer exchange programmes at all stages of life

Associated aspiration for Europe: a Europe which puts education at the forefront

What does this change cover?

Key words: educational exchanges, Erasmus

This change is broadly supported and reflects the importance for citizens of encounters and experiences abroad as a powerful source of European sentiment. The aim is to move from “academic knowledge to an approach to Europe based on lived and felt experience” and to understand education in the broad sense as life-long learning.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

The success of such a change depends primarily on the introduction of wider mobility opportunities, including, inter alia, educational exchanges, twinning, travel and professional mobility. Citizens consider that these opportunities must be accessible to all, especially people with low incomes or disabilities. For example, the Erasmus programme could include all Europeans, regardless of age or income. These programmes should be devised so as to be diverse, inclusive and accessible, with simplified administrative procedures.

Beyond mobility, the importance of encouraging closer links between education systems (diploma equivalence, etc.) and of making Europe more attractive to prevent the drain of talent to third countries was also mentioned.
Change 7 – Share European cultures through gatherings and events that bring people together

Associated aspiration for Europe: a Europe with shared cultures and identities

What does this change cover?

Key words: European festival, European public holiday, European Expo

The aim of this change is to create and maintain a European spirit through common experiences, events and festivities.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

Citizens envisage fun, unifying and popular events that can be shared by as many people as possible. To this end, they should involve all target groups (including children, school children, young people and Erasmus students) and take place in various locations (retirement homes, schools, public administrations, prisons, etc.).

In particular, two events were envisaged to bring Europeans together: a European Expo to represent all Member States and a revamp of Europe Day on 9 May, including an educational event “so that we do not forget the peace linked to Europe and its values”. At the same time, European representatives could meet the continent’s schoolchildren in their schools in order to strengthen citizens’ closeness to and understanding of Europe from an early age.
Change 8 – Harmonise healthcare and make it accessible to all Europeans through a common healthcare policy

Associated aspiration for Europe: a Europe of solidarity which protects

What does this change cover?

**Key words:** universal health coverage, harmonisation of care services, a fundamental right to health

To ensure access to healthcare for all Europeans and meet the “need for protection and solidarity”, a supranational healthcare system was unanimously proposed. It would be based on fair funding between Member States and draw on the best EU schemes. Such a change reflects the desire of citizens to see Europe take a more active role in the protection of its inhabitants, especially in the field of health, where action so far is considered too timid.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

To implement this change, the principle of universal European social security was approved by a majority. However, it was not possible to decide how this system would be implemented. While some argue for ‘a centralisation of data allowing [European] healthcare workers to access a patient’s entire medical history’, others perceive that measure as ‘a further loss of liberty, and a means of control’.

However, transparency and the harmonisation of regulatory requirements across the continent in this field, as well as a European Healthcare Plan, were identified as prerequisites for any significant change.
Change 9 – Develop and oversee strategic sectors at European level to ensure our sovereignty

Associated aspiration for Europe: A competitive and innovative Europe

What does this change cover?

Key words: development of European champions, control of foreign investment, digital and energy autonomy

Oversight at European level of sectors considered strategic, such as health, food, energy, digital, defence, transport and new materials, meets the need for sovereignty identified by citizens. Such oversight would limit competition between European companies, encourage the emergence of continental champions and reindustrialise Europe by means of a European preference.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

In order to achieve this sovereignty, a European authority could be tasked with overseeing these sectors by issuing authorisations for takeovers of European companies by foreign competitors and by ensuring that imported products meet the same standards as EU products. In the medium term, 30% to 50% of what is consumed in Europe in these strategic sectors should be produced in Europe, and up to 70% in the long term. Meeting these criteria would ensure self-sufficiency and international influence and even lead to the export of the European industrial model.
Change 10 – Improve the protection of ecosystems and environments and create protected areas at the heart of urban, peri-urban and rural areas

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe which promotes sustainable development

What does this change cover?

Key words: environmentally sustainable urbanisation, respect for and conservation of soil

The aim is to limit the negative impact of urbanisation on soil. Far-reaching action would limit disasters linked to soil degradation such as landslides and improve the quality of life in urban areas, including by planting trees.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

The proposed action is twofold: first of all reverse the trend of new builds to slow down the pace of soil sealing, and secondly, encourage soil restoration to give back to nature what belongs to it.
Change 11 – Set up local European contact points to consult with and advise citizens

Associated aspiration for Europe: A closer and more accessible Europe

What does this change cover?

Key words: Houses of Europe, local contact point for Europe, better access to information

The aim of this change is to provide concrete responses to the fact that the European Union is not felt to be present in everyday life, as highlighted by many participants, and to work to bring Europe and its citizens closer to one another.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

To close the gap between the EU and citizens, a specialised contact point could be appointed in each town hall with the role of listening to and advising citizens. The information provided by this report could be of a socio-economic nature, focusing on accessing European aid or information, for instance on the role of lobbyists. The information provided would be addressed to both the general public and professionals, in particular to advise SMEs and help project owners to access EU funds. In the long term, this change could lead to the creation of dedicated Europe hubs, similar to the existing Houses of Europe, but at local level, for optimal regional coverage.

This change would be seen as successful if every citizen instantly recognises this contact point and dedicated hub, which would provide resources, information and advice about Europe and where citizens would be listened to.
Change 12 – Standardise elections to the European Parliament in the 27 Member States and bring the EU closer to citizens by replacing the current voting method with uninominal voting at regional level

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe with more efficient governance

What does this change cover?

Key words: Institutional change, citizens monitor activity throughout the term of office

This change reflects citizens’ desire to be closer to elected representatives and to follow their activity throughout their term of office. It addresses the widely shared finding that citizens’ concerns do not lead to specific action by elected representatives in the European Parliament.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

The change in the election method would consist of a unified voting system at European level and the transition from national constituencies to regional constituencies, which is considered possible by 2035.
Change 13 – Establish a common policy to offer a better reception to and improve the social and professional integration of migrants (including irregular migrants)

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe which guarantees respect for fundamental rights

What does this change cover?

Key words: European migration office, guaranteeing a decent reception everywhere in Europe

The aim of this change is to improve the reception of migrants in the European Union, a problem which citizens unanimously identify as an emergency. In contrast to the current situation, the establishment of a common, concerted and solidarity-based immigration policy appears as a major contributor to peace.

What are the key stages and criteria for success?

The gradual implementation of a common policy on the reception of migrants would make this change a success.

A citizens’ initiative should submit this change to the Commission and, in the medium term, enable the adoption of a common standard defining a framework for the reception and social integration of migrants. In the long term, this standard would be supported by the creation of a specialised European immigration office and the recognition of migration policy as a European Union competence.
Change 14 – Preserve the specific characteristics (food labels, craft products, traditions) of the different European regions to prevent the homogenisation of ways of life and ensure product traceability and quality

Associated aspiration for Europe: A Europe where the interests of each state take priority

What does this change cover?

*Key words: European labels, promoting diversity of cultures and traditions*

The aim of this change is to preserve the **diversity of European traditions and products** and to prevent the **homogenisation** of ways of life – a criticism often levelled at the European Union.

**What are the key stages and criteria for success?**

From the point of view of the citizens, it is mainly a question of making the existing database of the different **European and national labels** more accessible. To this end, it was proposed that a website be created that follows the three-click principle: one click to access the site, a second to display a map of the regions of the European Union, and a third to bring up a description of each region’s labels.

Success with regard to this change would take the form of enhanced communication about existing practices, resulting in citizens’ having a better knowledge of the diversity of European cultures.
Part 2: presentation of the outcome of the ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ (‘Young People Have Their Say’) consultation

Dates of the consultation
09/05/2021 to 18/07/2021

Turnout figures
50 008 participants
2 918 proposals
338 330 votes

The ‘Parole aux Jeunes’ consultation was launched on the initiative of the Minister of State for European Affairs. This consultation forms part of the Conference on the Future of Europe, an unprecedented exercise in participatory democracy conducted by the European institutions, the aim of which is to give all European citizens the opportunity to voice their views on what they expect from the European Union. The consultation’s findings will inform the work of the Conference on the Future of Europe and of the French Presidency of the European Union.

4 main outcomes

1. A massive mobilisation of young people: over 50 000 young French citizens, across all the regions, took part in the consultation.

2. The most significant points of consensus concern European policies to combat climate change, relocating production to Europe, revitalising European democracy, and the EU’s global influence (economy, research, human rights, diplomacy).
3. **The idea of a more powerful and united Europe runs through the entire consultation**, and there is consensus on several points:

- A Europe that stronger economically (particularly as a result of relocation) to contend with China and the United States
- A diplomatic Europe with more clout on the international stage
- A Europe that is a world leader in the fight against climate change
- A Europe brought together by its young people
- A Europe united in research and innovation

4. **Four ideas supplementing** those generated by the citizens’ panels were also endorsed by the young participants:

- A European economy that is environmentally and socially responsible
- A Europe that is geographically more connected by rail
- A fairer Europe in terms of taxation
- Strong EU action to promote women’s rights
22 popular ideas and 13 controversial ideas divided among the nine topics of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The popular ideas are based on proposals supported by a majority of the participants in the consultation. Popular proposals are those that garner the most support, with an average of 79% of votes in favour.

The controversial ideas are based on the proposals that provoked the most debate among the participants in the consultation, with a balance between votes for and votes against. Controversial proposals are those most hotly debated during the consultation, with an average of 40% of votes in favour and 38% of votes against.

Analysis of these proposals led to the identification of 22 popular ideas and 13 controversial ideas. These 22 popular ideas and 13 controversial ideas were divided up into nine categories corresponding to the main topics of the Conference on the Future of Europe.
Summary of the popular and controversial ideas

**Climate change and environment**
- Establish a stronger European environmental policy
- Move towards more sustainable agriculture
- Do more to protect biodiversity
- Develop rail transport in the EU
- Accelerate the energy transition
- Reduce packaging and improve waste management
- Improve environmental awareness
- Promote green construction processes
- Invest more in nuclear

**European democracy**
- Communicate better on the role and work of the EU
- Fight disinformation
- Make Europe a federation
- Leave the Member States more autonomy
- Establish a stronger European executive power
- Give young people a place in the European institutions

**Economy, social justice and employment**
- Relocate production to Europe for greater autonomy
- Make commercial practices and trade more responsible
- Fight tax avoidance and optimisation
- Harmonise wages in Europe
- Introduce a universal income
- Move Europe towards an anticapitalist model

**Education, culture, youth and sport**
- Offer young people more exchanges with other EU countries
- Make a stay in another EU country compulsory for young people
- Encourage the learning of languages other than English

**Digital transformation**
- Invest in scientific, digital and environmental research
- Develop cryptocurrencies in Europe
- Raise awareness of digital and its dangers

**Values and rights, rule of law, security**
- Step up EU action on respect for human rights
- Strengthen women’s rights

**Health**
- Invest in health
- Improve the quality of our food products

**EU in the world**
- Strengthen the EU’s international influence
- Establish a European army

**Immigration**
- Reduce or assist with immigration in Europe

Very popular idea (> 10 popular proposals)
Somewhat popular idea (< 10 popular proposals)
Controversial idea (> 3 controversial proposals)
Conclusion

‘For you, in one word, Europe in 2035 should be...’:

Response from citizens participating in the national conference to the final question:

‘For you, in one word, Europe in 2035 should be...’