



Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on European Democracy, Chaired by Manfred Weber, European Parliament

22 October 2021, 14:00-16:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

The meeting took place in hybrid format. The discussion covered the points outlined in the agenda circulated before the meeting (annexed for information). The Chair started by highlighting the innovative nature of the Conference on the Future of Europe and welcoming in particular citizens to the Working Group meeting. He explained that he would give the floor to all participants in alphabetical order for them to introduce themselves and express their expectations from the Working Group.

The Chair also expressed his personal expectations for what he believed was the most exciting of the Working Groups, because of its horizontal topic and the aim to bring Europe closer to citizens. He mentioned among the topics for discussion: how to make European elections more attractive and increase voter turnout; how to increase the participation of young citizens; how to best use the potential of direct democracy; and how to improve the functioning of the EU institutions. He recalled the importance of ensuring respect for the fundamental values of the Union and the rule of law, as well as a good functioning of the media in an increasingly digital world.

2. Discussion

During the discussion, the representatives of the European Citizens' Panel on "European democracy/values, rights, rule of law, security" reported on the outcome of the first session this panel. They highlighted among the relevant topics for discussion:

- how to increase interest in and knowledge about the EU, including among young people;
- the role of communication, media and disinformation, and education;
- participation of citizens in elections, including at European level;
- how to make politics more engaging by involving citizens more directly, such as through participatory mechanisms and referenda;
- transparency, accountability and understandability of the EU decision-making;
- the protection of the EU values and the rule of law;
- ensuring rights and non-discrimination; and
- how to end blockages and ensure efficiency in the EU decision-making.

Other members of the Working Group brought up similar issues, with several speakers elaborating on the need to increase participation in European elections and to involve citizens better in the period between the elections. The importance of better communication and education on democracy was raised, as well as the need to ensure transparency in EU the decision-making process.

Some speakers called for a review of unanimity voting. Others underlined the need to ensure respect for the EU values and the rule of law, diversity, as well as media freedom and pluralism.

A number of further topics for debate were also raised, such as:

- the need to compare different integration and cooperation models for the future, with some representatives advocating for further integration and some warning about the risks of further centralisation of power;
- the division of competences between the EU and member states, and whether citizens wanted the EU to do more or less;
- the challenges related to the development of a truly European political space and transnational debate on EU issues;
- the importance of making the EP elections more relevant for citizens and giving them meaningful political choices;
- the role regional and local authorities, as well as organised civil society and social partners, could play in the EU decision-making process and in bringing the EU closer to citizens;
- the importance of solidarity and a common European identity;
- the importance of strengthening democracy in the economy, society and the workplace;
- the question whether a reopening of the Treaties would be needed.

Some speakers underlined the importance of reflecting the priorities and recommendations of citizens in the Working Group, as well as the need to ensure that all voices are heard.

3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

In his concluding remarks the Chair highlighted that listening carefully to each other was the first step towards having a better understanding. He noted that this first meeting set the basis for more in-depth discussions and work. The recommendations from the European Citizens' Panels would be available before the next meeting of the Working Group in December and would be the starting point for more concrete discussions. To best prepare the meeting, he invited the members of the Working Group to reflect on a list of concrete initiatives and suggested that a spokesperson for each component could be presenting the outcome of these reflections.

Strasbourg, 22 October 2021

DRAFT AGENDA

MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Friday, 22 October 2021 14:00 – 16:00 hrs

Room WEISS S1.4 and remote

STRASBOURG

1. Adoption of the draft agenda
2. Welcoming remarks and introduction of the Chair, Manfred WEBER, Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament
3. Report of Citizen's Panel representatives and on the Digital platform
4. Open exchange on the expectations on the Working Group's outcome
5. Open exchange on the working modalities and timeline
6. Any other business

ANNEX II. List of members of the Working Group on European Democracy

Chair: Manfred WEBER (European Parliament)

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Ms	Lenise	AGIUS	European citizens' panels
Ms	Chiara	ALICANDRO	European citizens' panels
Mr	Michalakis	ASIMAKIS	European citizens' panels
Mr	Zoltán	BALCZÓ	National Parliaments
Ms	Olga	BAUM	European citizens' panels
Mr	Matouš	BELOHLAVEK	European citizens' panels
Mr	Brando	BENIFEI	European Parliament
Ms	Mara	BIZZOTTO	European Parliament
Mr	Damian	BOESELAGER	European Parliament
Mr	Ioannis	BOURNOUS	National Parliaments
Mr	Nicolai	BOYSEN	National citizens' panels/events
Ms	Martina	BRAMBILLA	European citizens' panels
Mr	Gari	CAPPELLI	National Parliaments
Mr	Vasco	CORDEIRO	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Annemieke	DE CLERCK	European citizens' panels
Mr	Samuel	DENEFFE	National citizens' panels/events
Mr	Bruno	DIAS	National Parliaments
Mr	Gašper	DOVŽAN	Council
Ms	Aleksandra	DULKIEWICZ	Local/Regional representative
Mr	Pascal	DURAND	European Parliament
Ms	Anna	ECHTERHOFF	Civil Society
Mr	Sandro	GOZI	European Parliament
Ms	Pippa	HACKETT	Council
Ms	Eva Kjer	HANSEN	National Parliaments
Mr	Pablo	HISPÁN	National Parliaments
Mr	Wepke	KINGMA	Council
Mr	Tomáš	KOZÁK	Council
Mr	Zdzisław	KRASNODEBSKI	European Parliament
Ms	Ilona	KRONBERGA	Council
Mr	Reinhold	LOPATKA	National Parliaments
Ms	Esther	LYNCH	Social Partners
Mr	Evangelos	MEIMARAKIS	European Parliament
Mr	Aleksandar	MILISOV	European citizens' panels
Ms	Radvilė	MORKŪNAITĖ- MIKULĖNIENĖ	National Parliaments
Mr	Jorge Luis	PAZOS LOPEZ	European citizens' panels
Mr	Anti	POOLAMETS	National Parliaments
Mr	Arnoldas	PRANCKEVIČIUS	Council
Mr	Paulo	RANGEL	European Parliament
Ms	Ariane	RODERT	European Economic and Social Committee

Mr	Hans	ROTHENBERG	National Parliaments
Mr	Domènec Miquel	RUIZ DEVESA	European Parliament
Mr	Hermano	SANCHES RUIVO	Local/Regional representative
Mr	Axel	SCHÄFER	National Parliaments
Mr	Kaspar	SCHULTZ	National citizens' panels/events
Mr	Pedro	SILVA PEREIRA	European Parliament
Mr	Sven	SIMON	European Parliament
Ms	Lucie	STUDNICNA	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Dubravka	SUICA	European Commission
Ms	Wiktorja	TYSZKA-ULEZALKA	European citizens' panels
Mr	Apostolos	TZITZIKOSTAS	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Bastiaan	VAN APELDOORN	National Parliaments