



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

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on EU in the World

Chaired by Hans Dahlgren at the invitation of Clément Beaune, who could only attend for the first 20 minutes due to an emergency ministerial meeting

17 December 2021, 11:00-13:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

The meeting took place in fully remote format. Mr Beaune, welcomed participants and gave an overview of the key issues of the working group before handing over the chair to Mr Dahlgren.

Mr Dahlgren first touched on the structure of the meeting, in which he would give priority to speakers from the citizens' panels and would also allow "blue card" questions to be asked by them to other speakers and vice versa. He then invited the spokesperson of the European Citizens' Panel, Mr Mansef Campos, and his fellow panellists, to take the floor and present key issues, and drew attention to the interim report on the content of the multilingual digital platform.

2. Discussionⁱ

Key themes addressed by the representatives of the citizens' panels were:

-) The strategic autonomy of the EU
-) The need for the EU to credibly assert and spread its values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law
-) EU Trade policy, in terms of its economic side (including looking at improving the purchasing power of those seeking to buy EU produced goods) its political side (defending EU values, use of sanctions) and its environmental side (sustainability, ending the export of EU waste).
-) Energy autonomy of the EU, embracing decarbonisation in international supply chain
-) Maintaining a strong EU border; having stronger and more transparent intervention from FRONTEX that isn't based strictly on MS invitation, FRONTEX should ensure there is uniform border control at every EU border
-) Relations with neighbouring and nearby countries. Respect for smaller countries.
-) Strengthening of EU values both internally and externally.

-) Focusing on integrating all migrants and instilling a strong sense of European values in them
-) Diverging views on security and defence in an era of hybrid conflicts: military capacity and concept of a European Army. Common ground was to invest more in defence, also considering not all countries are a member of NATO.
-) QMV instead of unanimity in certain issues for more efficient decision-making.
-) Enlargement: need to ensure new members respect EU values and rule of law and respect of minorities. Public discourse and information sharing about enlargement policies and efforts – EU citizens need to understand a bit more what this would mean for the EU, also would like to know if any policies would change to better hold current EU members to standards and rules agreed to upon entry to the Union
-) Mediation should be offered to countries differing in opinions during proceedings in order to bring minority and majority groups closer to consensus. A focus on expediting decision making, notably ending the need for unanimity.

In response, representatives of other components intervened with these themes among those addressed:

-) The EU must be actively asserting itself on the global stage, it cannot be passive, it must establish strategic partnerships and create the world it wants to live in – relationship with the United States was highlighted
-) Focus on EU-values and Rule of law in foreign policy, including counteracting autocracy
-) Mixed views on EU Army, with a question about who the supreme commander of this army would be
-) EU relationship with NATO: deeper links or more autonomy?
-) Alternatives to unanimity could be QMV or new specific thresholds, including “unanimity minus one”
-) Trade policy: we should start by ratifying agreements we have made.
-) Key international issues such as the ongoing post-Brexit negotiations, and the activities of Russia in the region were also stressed

A further discussion point was the structure of the working group moving forward as well as the delivery of materials and the desired end product

- o Members called for a clear structure in terms of topical points and deliverables moving forward
- o Citizens also mentioned the need for additional preparation and better planning before these meetings

3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

Mr Dahlgren stressed that he is actively seeking to make this a productive and meaningful working group. This had been a useful discussion, but by the time of the next meeting, specific recommendations from the Citizens' panels will enable a more structured debate aiming to produce a meaningful output for the plenary. He is committed to ensuring there is clear communication between working group members as well as adequate preparation for the citizen component.

The possibility of setting up a WhatsApp group for working group members was suggested, . Mr Dahlgren assured that the possibility to set up a group before Christmas will be considered,

ⁱ The breakdown of interventions was as follows:

European Citizen panellists: 14
National panel/event representatives: 2
Civil society (SP, CoR, EESC): 4
Council: 5
National parliaments: 8
EP: 2
Commission: 0

Gender balance: 24 male 12 female interventions