



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

## SUMMARY RECORD

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

**18 February 2022, 14:00-16:00**

### **1. Introductory remarks of the Chair**

The meeting took place in remote format and was web-streamed ([recording available here](#)). The Chair explained that the aim was to finish the discussions on the remaining two pillars of the working structure of the Working Group, namely the executive power of the Union and subsidiarity. He also outlined the plans for future work, announcing that the next meetings of the Working Group would take place on 11 March, 25 March and 8 April (if necessary). He recalled his intention to prepare a non-paper with draft proposals, which would be first discussed with citizens, before presentation to the other members of the Working Group. Regarding the approval of the proposals, he noted that a consensus needed to be reached at least among the European Parliament, Council, Commission and National Parliaments' components, with negotiations at different levels of the working structures of the Conference, as necessary.

### **2. Discussion**

#### **2.1. Executive Power**

The members of the Working Group then engaged in a discussion on the various aspects of the implementation of EU policies and legislation. The principles of accountability, transparency and credibility were mentioned, and members referred to expectations of a uniform implementation and enforcement of EU rules. Participants noted the need for the EU institutions, national governments and regional and local authorities to work hand in hand to be successful in the implementation process. It was noted in particular that Member States had an important role to play, while the Commission had a central role when it came to assistance, oversight and enforcement, including by bringing cases to the Court of Justice. Ensuring access to information and an effective dialogue between citizens and decision-makers at EU level, as highlighted in citizens' recommendations, were also seen as key for how citizens perceived the implementation of EU decisions.

Members concurred on the importance of ensuring the EU's capacity to act, in line with citizens' recommendations. Some speakers felt that this required a further move from unanimity towards quality majority voting in the Council of the European Union. Two members considered that a lot could be achieved by being more flexible and resolute in using the existing mechanisms to address new issues on the EU's agenda, as had been the case with the procurement of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic or the management of the hybrid migration crisis on the EU's eastern border. Without excluding Treaty revisions, it was highlighted that the Lisbon treaty already has mechanism that could be used, e.g. would already allow Commissioners to be 2/3 of Member States.

A number of speakers referred to the protection of the rule of law as a case in point when it comes to the need to ensure compliance with EU law, expressing support for citizens' wish to strengthen the EU's response in this regard. There were some calls upon the Commission to apply the existing conditionality regulation linked to the EU budget, as well as suggestions to go beyond the current



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

regulation to sanction breaches. Other suggestions included improving the monitoring mechanisms and reviewing the decision-making procedures under Article 7 TEU, as well as a call to respect Member States' diversity. The importance of credibility of EU action was also raised, as highlighted in citizens' recommendation on ensuring respect for the rule of law internally in order for the EU to be able to set an example worldwide.

A few members also raised other issues related to the implementation of treaty provisions, calling for the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights without delay, as well as for guaranteeing the right of initiative for social partners' agreements. Additionally individual members called for reducing the number of Commissioners and making the Commission more accountable to the European Parliament.

## 2.2. Subsidiarity and procedures

The discussions also touched upon the role of regional and local authorities in bridging the gap between citizens and EU institutions, and how EU procedures and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality could be further developed to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens and adequately take into account impact at regional and local level.

A number of concrete suggestions were made for promoting the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and multilevel governance in the EU, such as upgrading the role of the Committee of the Regions in the preparation of EU legislation, including a territorial dimension in impact assessments and reflecting the principle of multi-level governance in the Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Law-making. Members also discussed how to better involve national parliaments and regional parliaments, especially in areas where regions have legislative power, such as through green or red card procedures, which would allow a certain number of parliaments to propose or block EU legislation. There was also a suggestion to explore new forms of cooperation between the EP and national parliaments, for instance joint plenary debates on the EU budget.

In addition, the important role of regional and local representatives in informing citizens and engaging them in debate on EU issues was raised and a suggestion was made to promote their exchange opportunities. A few members pointed out that in line with the principle of subsidiarity in some areas action should best be taken at EU level, suggesting to also consider in which areas competences could be moved from Member States to the EU level, taking into account citizens' recommendations.

In her role as Co-Chair, Commission Vice-President Šuica invited the Working Group members to look carefully at each citizens' recommendation and debate them on the basis of clusters. She underlined that citizens must be able to take full ownership and validate all proposals and the importance of following a common approach for all Working Groups in line with the methodology discussed within the Conference structures. Other members echoed the need of having citizens' recommendations at the heart of the process and keeping a horizontal approach across Working Groups.

## 3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

The Chair recalled the 5 pillars agreed in the autumn which were being completed in this meeting. He confirmed that he would prepare a non-paper, based on the recommendations from European and National Citizens' Panels and taking into account the ideas from the platform and the discussions in the Working Group, identifying concrete draft proposals. He informed that he would first consult the



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

citizens on these proposals and then present them to all members of the Working Group for discussion. He also expressed the wish for the different components to identify contact points for work on the draft proposals and undertook to take the next steps in full transparency. Finally, he noted that work on draft proposals would continue in the Conference Plenary and that the conclusions of the Conference Plenary would be drawn up by the Executive Board.



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

**ANNEX I. Agenda for the meeting on 18 February 2022**

## **AGENDA OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY**

Friday, 18 February – 14:00 – 16:00  
**(remote)**

1. Opening by the Chair
2. Presentation by citizens of the recommendations from European Citizens' Panel relating to European Democracy, followed by a discussion
3. Discussion on the Third Interim Report from the Multilingual Digital Platform
4. Exchange of views on European Democracy
  - 4.1 Executive power
  - 4.2 Subsidiarity and procedures
5. Any other business
6. Closing by the Chair



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

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

**Chair: Manfred WEBER (European Parliament)**

Title	First name	Last name	Component
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	BĚLOHLÁVEK	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	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	Eva Kjer	HANSEN	National Parliaments
Mr	Pablo	HISPÁN	National Parliaments
Ms	Pat	Kelly	Council
Ms	Antonia	KIEPER	European citizens panels
Mr	Wepke	KINGMA	Council
Mr	Tomáš	KOZÁK	Council
Mr	Zdzisław	KRASNODEBSKI	European Parliament
Mr	Reinhold	LOPATKA	National Parliaments
Ms	Esther	LYNCH	Social Partners
Mr	Evangelos	MEIMARAKIS	European Parliament
Mr	Aleksandar	MILISOV	European citizens panels
Ms	Radvilė	MORKUNAITĖ- MIKULĖNIENĖ	National Parliaments
Ms	Dorien	NIJS	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Jorge Luis	PAZOS LOPEZ	European citizens panels
Mr	Anti	POOLAMETS	National Parliaments
Mr	Arnoldas	PRANCKEVIČIUS	Council
Mr	Paulo	RANGEL	European Parliament



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

Ms	Ariane	ROBERT	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	Wiktoria	TYSZKA ULEZALKA	European citizens panels
Mr	Apostolos	TZITIKOSTAS	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Bastiaan	VAN APeldoorn	National Parliaments
Mr	Andris	VĪTOLS	Council