



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

SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on Values and rights, rule of law, security
Chaired by Věra Jourová, Vice-President, European Commission
Friday 22 October 2021, 11:00-13:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

Chair Věra JOUROVÁ opened the meeting by welcoming all participants. The meeting was held in hybrid format. 40 of the 52 members of the Working Group were physically present and 5 followed the meeting remotely; of which 27, including a majority of the present citizens, participated in the discussion.

The Chair then outlined some of the many topics that fall under the remit of the Working Group (e.g. fundamental rights and freedoms, European identity, gender equality, fight against terrorism, etc.). She referred to the ideas expressed so far on the Multilingual Digital Platform on the topic of Values and rights, rule of law, security and about the priority topics identified in the first session of the European Citizens' Panel 2 (see report from session 1 of Panel 2 [here](#)).

She noted that the Working Group will be able to discuss the recommendations of European Citizens' Panel 2 in December.

The Chair then opened the floor to all those who wanted to intervene in the discussion, urging them to limit their interventions to two minutes.

2. Discussion

Some participants raised preliminary procedural questions, including on how the WG should organise its discussions (e.g. having an agenda structured around specific topics), present its work to the Plenary and whether to meet also in between Plenaries. Some participants also called for the Working Group's meetings to be more transparent, for example through public webstream, and public sharing of all documentation.

The Chair recalled that the Working Group will take into account the outcome of European Citizens' Panels and the input on the Platform. She also agreed on the importance of transparency of the work of the Working Group.

On substance, most participants stressed that rule of law and values and rights are an essential component of the EU, which needs to be strengthened and reaffirmed.

Some posed the question whether the Conference on the Future of Europe is a vision exercise aiming at improving a well-functioning rule of law and values and rights system or whether a real reform is necessary. Many called for a tangible result of the Conference.

Some Working Group members called for a clearer definition of EU values and of the EU rule of law common standard. They often noted that the EU is more than a mere single market. However, other participants stressed that the rule of law and the EU's values are already well defined in the EU Treaties and by the Court of Justice.

In this regard, participants also discussed the balance to be struck between common standards and individual countries' diversity. Many members described the EU as a rules-based system where the rule of law should be a non-negotiable principle. Some participants nonetheless noted the need to respect countries' specificities.

Moreover, many participants insisted on the need to improve the actual implementation of existing EU rights and values, which is key to the EU's credibility and legitimacy vis-à-vis citizens.

As part of this call to deliver, several participants indicated that the EU should adhere to the European Convention on Human Rights without further delay.

Some participants pointed to the contributions on the Multilingual Digital Platform and the outcome of the first session of European Citizens' Panel 2 regarding EU citizenship rights and suggested to advance further in developing the statute of EU citizenship instead of focusing on identity. Working Group members noted in this regard that the Panels have a real chance to set the EU's political agenda.

Several participants also highlighted the fundamental character of social rights, describing decent working and life conditions as a key component of the EU's rights and values system.

The issues of disinformation, media freedom, the family, demography and children's rights were also raised by several participants.

3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

Chair JOUROVÁ concluded the discussion by summarising the main points that were raised by participants.

On process, the Chair recapped that:

- She will bring to the attention of the Executive Board the wish to live stream the Working Group's discussions .
- The Working Group will have an agenda distributed in advance to each meeting, without, however, excluding topics from the broad subject of the Working Group.
- The question of interaction with other Working Groups should be addressed.
- Any further interpretation needs will be addressed.
- She recalled that the citizen's spokesperson for the Working Group will be selected at a later stage.

On substance, she summarised the following main points:

- The rule of law is non-negotiable, while more dialogue and common understanding are needed. Diversity has to be valued, but based on common standards.
- The need for the EU to move from words to acts. Existing rules and principles should be fully applied in practice. This is especially the case for the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- The need to reaffirm the principles on which the EU is based, not as a single market but as a Union of values, whilst addressing the challenges brought by Brexit and the Covid-19 crisis.
- A firm defence of the EU's values, asserting and further refining the already existing definitions of rule of law, values and rights.
- The need for a broader discussion on values, including also corruption and security threats.
- The need to establish a connection to social and children's rights, to right of privacy, media pluralism.
- The need to further develop EU citizenship instead of entering the personal sphere of identities.

ANNEX. List of members of the Working Group on Values and rights, rule of law, security

Ms	Ilse	AIGNER	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Daniel	ANDERSSON	National Parliaments
Ms	Valentina	BALZANI	European citizens panels
Ms	Katarina	BARLEY	European Parliament
Mr	Paolo	BARONE	European citizens panels
Mr	Nicolas	BAY	European Parliament
Mr	Ondřej	BENEŠÍK	National Parliaments
Mr	Laurent	BERGER	Social Partners
Ms	Elsa	BESTARD	European citizens panels
Mr	Vladimír	BILČÍK	European Parliament
Mr	Yves	CRUCHTEN	National Parliaments
Ms	Katalin	CSEH	European Parliament
Ms	Gwendoline	DELBOS-CORFIELD	European Parliament
Ms	Klára	DOBREV	European Parliament
Ms	Mandy	FALZON	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Petros	FASSOULAS	Civil Society
Ms	Paula	FERNANDEZ VIANA	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Daniel	FREUND	European Parliament
Mr	Esteban	GONZALEZ PONS	European Parliament
Mr	Branko	GRIMS	National Parliaments
Ms	Alice-Mary	HIGGINS	National Parliaments
Mr	Richárd	HÖRCSIK	National Parliaments
Mr	Gerhard	HUEMER	Social Partners
Ms	Věra	JOUROVÁ	European Commission
Ms	Zanda	KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA	Council
Mr	Martin	KLUS	Council

Mr	Jeppe	KOFOD	Council
Mr	Georgios	KOTSIRAS	Council
Ms	Hajnalka	KOZMANE GOMBKOTO	European citizens panels
Mr	Karl-Heinz	LAMBERTZ	Local/Regional representative
Mr	Tommy Kofoed	LARSEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Normunds	LEGZDINS	European citizens panels
Mr	Christian	MOOS	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Rasmus	NORDQVIST	National Parliaments
Ms	Ninni	NORRA	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Maria Teresa	PAGAZAURTUNDUA RUIZ	European Parliament
Mr	Kacper	PŁAŻYŃSKI	National Parliaments
Mr	Pere Joan	PONS	National Parliaments
Mr	Michael	ROTH	Council
Mr	Jacek	SARYUSZ-WOLSKI	European Parliament
Ms	Joy Clara	SCHAEFLEIN	European citizens panels
Mr	Helmuth Franz	SCHLAGOWSKI	European citizens panels
Mr	Helmut	SCHOLZ	European Parliament
Mr	Sjoerd	SJOERDSMA	National Parliaments
Ms	Romana	TOMC	European Parliament
Ms	Tytti	TUPPURAINEN	Council
Mr	Štefan	URBANEK	European citizens panels
Mr	Karl	VANLOUWE	National Parliaments
Mr	Claudiu Marian	VATAU	European citizens panels
Ms	Ozlem	YILDIRIM	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Kristīne	ZONBERGA	National citizens panels/events