



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

SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

Chaired by Iratxe García Pérez, European Parliament

25 March 2022, 9:00-11:30; 14:00-16:00

1) Opening by the Chair

The meeting took place in a hybrid format and was web-streamed. The chair introduced the draft proposals circulated to the members in advance to the meeting. She specified the document included an introduction and a new cluster on competitiveness (compared to the previously discussed grid). She stressed that achieving a balance between the recommendations of citizens and the ideas of the working group members is a complex task but trusted the draft proposals offered a good basis for the discussion. The Chair announced also the completion of the work of the Italian national citizen panel that submitted a substantial number of recommendation in the policy areas relevant to this Working Group.¹ They will be taken on board in the next version of the draft proposals.

2) Intervention by the Spokespersons

The spokesperson announced the change in the function. The deputy spokesperson agreed the document was in line with the citizens' recommendations.

Presentation and discussion on the draft proposals, as per the annex, with a view to presenting draft proposals to the Plenary on 26 March, organized by cluster.

Members commented in the first round the structure and general content of the document. Some objected because they did not feel that their ideas were (well) represented in the document and the document was still being biased towards social issues. Some proposed to revamp the document in the light of the new situation with the war in Ukraine. However, many were satisfied with the text and thanked the chair for the work done and intervened during the debate with specific issues. Written contributions were announced by some speakers in the debate. Some mentioned that the WG conclusions should clearly reflect the diversity of EU citizens' ideas, while others said that controversial proposals should be taken out. Citizens stressed that this work was about more long-term goals and that they did not want their ideas changed substantially and watered down. There was a call for not using an overly prescriptive language in the proposals, while other members stressed the need to maintain the ambition of the citizen's recommendations.

¹ As stored on the Platform webpage: <https://futureu.europa.eu/pages/plenary>



3) Sustainable growth and innovation

Members discussed support for innovation, research and SMEs and a specific focus on start-ups as the driver of innovation and cross-border cooperation. The importance of a sustainable energy mix to improve EU strategic autonomy was raised by several speakers. Some members advocated for a more general wording as there was no agreement on nuclear and gas, whilst others wanted to keep the current text. Food security and strategic autonomy more generally, including the access to raw materials were discussed. While a few speakers questioned the need to discuss the economic governance framework in the context of the Conference, many stressed its fundamental role for a stronger and resilient economy and asked for its inclusion, in particular from the European Semester perspective. Several members called for the consideration of new indicators going beyond GDP. The proposal for a social progress protocol to be inserted in the Treaty to ensure that social rights take precedence in case of conflict with economic freedoms – a proposal very frequently endorsed on the digital platform – was recalled.

4) Enhancing EU's competitiveness and further deepening the Single Market

Several members tabled the ideas of the single market test and the competitiveness checks (i.e. an independent, transparent assessment of impact of EU legislative proposals on the competitiveness of EU companies, in particular with regard to global dimension). The need to reduce bureaucracy and red tape was recognized as prerequisite for the EU's competitiveness. One speaker called for "one in – two out" principle (on top of currently promoted 'one in – one out' approach) while another called this proposal too excessive.

5) Inclusive labour markets

A discussion on the promotion of minimum wages, while still respecting national traditions, took place. While some speakers called for removing the reference to it (as it is already covered by the ongoing negotiations between the EU institutions), others disagreed as this would go against the citizens' recommendations. Members raised the issue of protection of workers in the digital labour market. Several members called for strengthening different aspects of gender equality throughout the proposals. Some called for more focus on young people and their needs in terms of quality jobs, housing but also environmental concerns. Some members supported the current proposal to ban unpaid traineeships, while some while others wanted to 'soften' the language and would prefer that there was a reference to a more prominent promotion of paid traineeships. Also more efforts are needed to boost people's skills and address skill shortages. Several speakers referred to the linkages between the European Pillar of Social Rights and the draft proposals.

6) Stronger social policies



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There was a general convergence of views on the need for stronger social policies with some members calling for more action (e.g. on minimum income schemes, eradication of homelessness) while others recalling the subsidiarity principle.

7) Demographic transition

The need to address demographic challenges was addressed by several speakers, among others through children and family friendly measures and actions to support care-takers and elderly people.

8) Fiscal and tax policies

Improving transparency and fairness of taxation across the EU, to support SMEs and innovation, was supported by many. Other speakers called for the need for more measures to prevent tax avoidance and if needed give the EU more competence in this area. A discussion on Eurobonds, with the reference to the national citizens' panel recommendations, took place with some members calling to remove it and returning to the original wording of the recommendation. To boost territorial cohesion, the need to improve multi-governance and the use of the EU funds was called for by one member.

9) Closing by the Chair

The chair closed the meeting thanking the members for a fruitful exchange and announcing a new draft incorporating the inputs, which will be circulated in view of the next WG meeting.

ANNEX. List of members of the Working Group on A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

Chair: Iratxe GARCIA PEREZ (European Parliament)

Spokesperson: Camila JENSEN

Deputy Spokesperson: Eoin STAFFORD

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Mr	Vincenzo	AMENDOLA	Council
Ms	Clotilde	ARMAND	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Manon	AUBRY	European Parliament
Ms	Regina	BASTOS	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Nicola	BEER	European Parliament
Mr	Markus	BEYRER	Social Partners
Ms	Gabriele	BISCHOFF	European Parliament
Ms	Maret Michaela	BRUNNERT	European citizens panels
Mr	Christian	BUCHMANN	National Parliaments



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Mr	Jan	CHLUP	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Rosianne	CUTAJAR	National Parliaments
Ms	Helena	DALLI	European Commission
Ms	Elisa	GAMBARDELLA	Civil Society
Ms	Iratxe	GARCÍA PÉREZ	European Parliament
Mr	Wilm	GEURTS	Council
Mr	Roman	HAIDER	European Parliament
Ms	Eveliina	HEINÄLUOMA	National Parliaments
Mr	Michiel	HOOGEVEEN	European Parliament
Ms	Meira	HOT	National Parliaments
Ms	Camila Isabelle Chalotte	JENSEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Marina	KALJURAND	European Parliament
Mr	Siim	KALLAS	National Parliaments
Mr	Joémy	LINDAU	European citizens panels
Mr	Stefano	MALLIA	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Vladimíra	MARCINKOVÁ	National Parliaments
Ms	Mairead	MCGUINNESS	European Commission
Ms	Andreja	METELKO-ZGOMBIC	Council
Ms	Roberta	METSOLA	European Parliament
Mr	Radu-Mihai	MIHAIL	National Parliaments
Ms	Lucía	MUÑOZ	National Parliaments
Mr	Siegfried	MUREŞAN	European Parliament
Mr	Niklas Hendrik	NIENASS	European Parliament
Ms	Leverne	NIJMAN	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Marina	NIKOLAOU	National Parliaments
Mr	Władysław	ORTYL	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Kacper	PAROL	European citizens panels
Ms	Sirpa	PIETIKÄINEN	European Parliament
Mr	Neale	RICHMOND	National Parliaments
Mr	Vibe	RØMER WESTH	Council
Mr	Oliver	RÖPKE	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Christophe	ROUILLON	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Nicolas	SCHMIT	European Commission
Mr	Vladimír	ŠORF	European citizens panels
Mr	Eoin	STAFFORD	European citizens panels
Ms	Eva-Maria	LIIMETS	Council
Ms	Katja	TRILLER VRTOVEC	Council



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Ms	Els	VAN HOOF	National Parliaments
Ms	Monika	VANA	European Parliament
Mr	Luca	VISENTINI	Social Partners
Ms	Ružica	VUKOVAC	National Parliaments