



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

## **SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATION**

Tuesday 1 March 2022 17:30 – 19:30 (online)

### **1. Opening by the Chair**

*Successive Chairs: Alessandro Alfieri, Member of the Italian Senate, Italy; Dimitris Kairidis, Member of the Hellenic Parliament, Greece*

The Chair, Mr Alfieri, opened the meeting and expressed full solidarity with the Ukrainian people, calling the war and aggression against Ukraine a turning point for Europe, including on migration issues.

The Chair announced that the summary record of the previous meeting held on 21 January was considered approved and will be translated in all languages and uploaded on the platform.

### **2. Presentation of the recommendations by citizens from European Citizens' Panel 4 and of recommendations of National Citizens Panels, linked to migration**

Citizens from the European Citizens' Panels did not wish to present all the recommendations one by one, but preferred to outline the recommendations adopted by the Panel linked to migration.

Two citizens from the European Citizens Panel took the floor, and reported about recommendations on Asylum policy and integration, and on Legal migration. One of the citizens could not take the floor due to technical problems.

Among others, they stated that:

- there are many overlapping recommendations;
- most of the recommendations were made on the asylum policy;
- they stated that they are aware of the situation in Ukraine, and it shows that the migration system in European does not work as it should be;
- they mentioned the need for a uniform system at European level respecting human rights;
- a common approach is needed, not only of uniform rules, but also support to Member States, especially border MS;
- solidarity is key especially regarding managing asylum seekers;
- the need for common procedures based on common practices;
- citizens also demanded better reception structures;
- they advocated for replacing the Directive on minimum standards for asylum seekers with a mandatory Regulation;



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- they called for implementation to be monitored at European level as well;
- they mentioned that the EU should provide assistance to Member States processing of asylum seekers;
- they called for asylum requests to be assessed faster including the redistribution of asylum seekers in the EU and mentioned that in case of rejection of asylum, the migrants should be repatriated;
- finally, citizens mentioned that integration and return of migrants should be redirected to the European border Member States that are most exposed to migratory flows.

Following this presentation, representatives of the Dutch (NL) and Lithuanian (LT) National Citizens' Panels with recommendations on the theme of migration also presented their recommendations, namely:

- the debate should not lose sight of the finer points, and more attention should be given to the reasons why people flee unsafe countries (NL citizens' panel);
- the distribution of refugees should be fair, with clear criteria (NL citizens' panel);
- the EU should support countries of origin with knowledge and experience to mitigate causes for migration such as climate change or conflicts (NL citizens' panel);
- to set up a commission at EU level, dedicated to migration challenges, to guarantee quicker responses to migration crises and to draw up common guidelines for the management of migration (LT citizens' panel)
- to return to the question of establishing a quota system at EU level (LT citizens' panel)
- to review the EU's open migration policy (LT citizens' panel)
- to speak more actively about migration policy issues and initiate discussions about migration challenges (LT citizens' panel)
- for the EU to pursue an active and rigorous policy towards states using migration flows as a tool for hybrid attacks (LT citizens' panel).

Due to technical issues, one of the citizens representing the French National Citizens' Panel was unable to take the floor.

Due to the technical issues, which prevented two citizens from presenting their recommendations, the Chair decided that the next meeting of the Working Group (WG), to be held in Strasbourg, would start with a follow-up on the presentation of citizens' recommendations.

### **3. Exchange of views on the citizens' recommendations**

The discussion in the working group was organised around those recommendations or questions linked to migration (19).



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The Chair invited **Vice President Schinas**, participating exceptionally in this Working Group, to present his views on the Conference and on citizens' recommendations. Vice President Schinas stressed the following:

- The importance that the discussion on the future of Europe continues even at the moment clouded by unprecedented events thought relic of the past.
- The process of the Conference should concern more citizens (bottom up approach): the Commission ("Brussels") should not be in the lead (top down approach).
- He welcomed the richness of the contributions and recommendations, highlighting that they are fully aligned to the Commission's work, putting forward a holistic, cohesive and comprehensive EU framework for migration and asylum policies. The VP regretted that despite its economic strength and importance in the world, the Union still does not have a common migration policy.
- He underlined that present times of instrumentalisation, the Ukrainian crisis and an ever increasing insecurity in the world compel us to advance fast and agree on the Pact. He presented the main pillars of the Pact as "a house with three floors":
  - o ground level – the relations with countries of origin and transit – need to build partnership agreements with neighbours to offer better lives in places of origin rather than smuggling;
  - o first floor - robust collective EU system for managing external border – stating that it was not moral, fair and politically acceptable to delegate this responsibility exclusively to Member States of first entry; this is a collective EU responsibility which needs to be assumed together by all EU countries with uniform asylum procedures;
  - o top floor: solidarity and burden-sharing – all 27 Member States would have to assume on a basis of repartition key the right solidarity mix to all contribute to responsibility of managing migration

The Members of the WG generally welcomed the recommendations adopted by the European and National Citizens Panels. During the exchange, the following points were made:

- the need for the revision of the Directive on reception conditions (2013/33/EU) was mentioned;
- the need for better care (e.g. reception conditions, education, integration) of unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups;
- overhaul/abolition of the "Dublin rules";
- focusing external action to tackle root causes of migration in third countries (including climate change and conflict, return and readmission to safe countries and preventing flows from unsafe countries (together with better protection of external borders));
- better integration (added value that refugees bring into EU);
- distinction between refugees and migrants;
- clear criteria for fair distribution of refugees among EU countries;



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- the importance of the implementation of common guidelines on migration management, of a quota system for migrants linking Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to solidarity; of more effective policy against instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes and common action against hybrid attacks common action but also strong criticism against Commission's position against funding of physical barriers which are considered necessary
- the important role of local and regional authorities for the integration of migrants and for a change of mind-set to positive language and messaging around migration;
- recommendations 7, 10, 27, 31 on access to employment, equal labour rights, rapid regularisation of status were particularly acknowledged in one intervention;
- important and increased role for Frontex;
- recommendation 40 on the importance of solidarity was welcomed by a member who, stressed that the Pact represents a total rework of the migration system and expressed hopes that negotiations on the legislative proposals will quickly start;
- the need for a uniform and transparent migration management system based on solidarity and in full respect of human rights was highlighted;
- the need to address the root causes of migration;
- offer safe and legal pathways with an automatic mechanism for relocation criticising that there is too much burden on frontline states;
- the final recommendations should be inclusive, all opinions and recommendations from the different sources including the Platform should be included;
- the importance of the external aspects of migration and in particular mutual beneficial partnerships with third countries;
- stressed the protection of external borders and security – threat of instrumentalisation/hybrid war;
- stressed the importance to avoid a system which created pull factors for migrants;
- On the issue of temporary protection, the “residence permits on national law” signals that Ukrainian nationals should return to their country once the crisis had passed.

**The Chair invited Vice President Schinas** to react to the debate. The Vice-President clarified the following:

- priorities tend to be fragmented; partial approaches/solutions are not valid, all aspects need to be equally built and resilient to help the EU cope effectively and in a sustainable manner with migratory flows; it is vitally important to strike the right political balance between responsibility and solidarity, where solution are capable of addressing the needs of every Member States regardless of geographical location.
- legal migration – Europe needs skilled workers in many areas, like healthcare, digital, green economics, cyber security; important to organise the legal migration system to match needs with available expertise and resources in neighbouring countries (to the EU) to produce skills and talent partnerships.



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- the **Vice President announced** that the European Commission would very soon adopt proposals to activate the temporary protection Directive, offering to people coming from Ukraine temporary protection to ensure automatic access to health, education and housing system, granting resident permits. This measure is also a means to help Member States in first line of reception and constitutes a piece in the puzzle of EU response to the war in Ukraine.

#### **4. Concluding remarks by the former Chair**

The former Chair congratulated citizens for their commitment and their hard work. He also expressed hope towards the results of the Conference.

#### **5. Closing by the Chair**

The Chair informed the Members that the next meeting of the Working Group is on 11 March 2022 in Strasbourg, highlighting that citizens will be invited to discuss once more their recommendations.



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## Annex: list of members

Mr	Carmelo	ABELA	Council
Mr	Arnoldas	ABRAMAVICIUS	Council
Mr	Alessandro	ALFIERI	National Parliaments
Ms	Abir	AL-SAHLANI	European Parliament
Mr	Konstantinos	ANDREADAKIS	European citizens panels
Mr	Marc	ANGEL	European Parliament
Mr	Malik	AZMANI	European Parliament
Mr	Pernando	BARRENA ARZA	European Parliament
Mr	Gunnar	BECK	European Parliament
Mr	Magnus	BERNTSSON	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Marjolijn	BULK	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Jaroslav	BŽOCH	National Parliaments
Mr	Luís	CAPOULAS SANTOS	National Parliaments
Ms	Liina	CARR	Social Partners
Ms	Iness	CHAKIR	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Laura Maria	CINQUINI	European citizens panels
Ms	Gabriella	CÍVICO	Civil Society
Mr	Angel	DZHAMBAZKI	European Parliament
Ms	Karoline	EDTSTADLER	Council
Ms	Julia	EICHBERGER	European citizens panels
Mr	Joseph	ELLIS	National Parliaments
Mr	Harris	GEORGIADES	National Parliaments
Mr	Vasil	GEORGIEV	Council
Ms	Elsie	GISSLEGÅRD	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Sunčana	GLAVAK	European Parliament
Mr	Ľudovít	GOGA	National Parliaments
Ms	Hafida	GUELLATI	European citizens panels
Ms	Gabriela	HEGENBERG	European citizens panels
Ms	Ylva	JOHANSSON	European Commission
Mr	Dimitris	KAIRIDIS	National Parliaments
Mr	Jeroen	LENAERS	European Parliament
Mr	Cees	LOGGEN	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Oudekki	LOONE	National Parliaments
Mr	Arminas	LYDEKA	National Parliaments
Ms	Aurora	MEJÍA ERRASQUÍN	Council
Ms	Augusta	MONTARULI	National Parliaments
Ms	Nathalie	OBERWEIS	National Parliaments



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Mr	Oszkár	ÖKRÖS	Council
Mr	Philippe	OLIVIER	European Parliament
Mr	Laurentiu	PLOSCEANU	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Yoomi	RENSTRÖM	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Desislava	SIMEONOVA	European citizens panels
Mr	Andrzej	SKIBA	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Sara	SKYTTEDAL	European Parliament
Mr	Jordi	SOLÉ	European Parliament
Ms	Petra	STEGER	National Parliaments
Mr	Tuomas Heikki	SUIHKONEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kata	TUTTO	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Nils	USAKOVS	European Parliament
Mr	Hubregt	VERHOEVEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Dragan	VOLAREVIĆ	European citizens panels
Mr	Krasimir	ZLATINOV	European citizens panels