



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

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on EU in the World Chaired by Ms Asees Ahuja (SE), 7 April 2022, 18h to 20h30

Opening of the meeting

The Chair stressed the goal of the meeting is to finalise proposals. The revised document provided to the Working Group members had taken account of points mentioned in our previous Working Group meeting as well as written feedback submitted by members. The Common Secretariat had collaborated with the citizens' component when drafting these modifications. All suggestions were considered, some were just not embraced by the citizen component. The Chair also highlighted that she had had an informal citizens' meeting that took place virtually on Tuesday. While looking at the revised proposals prepared for this meeting, the Chair and the spokesperson believed the contributions were ones that provided depth and didn't diverge much from what the citizens had at the heart of their proposals – the recommendations. Citizens also decided that any topics that might overlap with other Working Groups would be kept in this Working Group because there was indeed specific external relations aspects that were addressed in the proposals.

As in previous meetings, the proposals were addressed in cluster order, this time proposal by proposal in order to address any lingering disagreement or desires for improvement from all components of the Working Group.

Before the proposals were all addressed individually, there was a debate about the relevance of some of these proposals in this Working Group, especially stressed by the National Parliament component of the Working Group. The Spokesperson again stressed that all of these topics are being looked at from the perspective of the EU acting in an international context. Other components acknowledged there are likely overlaps with other Working Groups, but it is better to have overlap than to risk omitting relevant proposals. The WG agreed on an inclusive approach.

Proposal Debate

Proposal 1 saw lively debate where ideas ranged from investments being undertaken at the EU and national levels in strategic sectors to utilizing existing programs like InvestEU. Concerns about addressing potential short-term increases in poverty for these types of strategic actions were discussed. The citizens acknowledged poverty and other short-term issues must be addressed to have a fair and just transition, but the long-term benefits were immense. The issue of autonomy vs. protectionism was also discussed. The citizens defended a move towards autonomy in strategic areas, while acknowledging the benefits of a competitive and open market.

Proposals 2 and 3 were both discussed heavily as options that overlap and seem to converge with proposals made in other Working Groups. Citizens stressed that the EU must be able to secure resources from ethically defensible sources. In proposal 3 on energy production and supply, the citizens argued that the recommendations were intended precisely to remain broad allowing for applicable to future situations, rather than mentioning specific countries/regions.

Proposal 4 saw the lengthiest debate in the meeting. Citizens wanted to ensure that the focus remained on the fact that they want the EU to be speedy and efficient when making decisions. There was a great deal of discourse on QMV: how it could be utilized within the current treaties as well as discussion of treaty change in order to make it generally applicable. Enlargement discussions focused on keeping in mind the strategic

importance of enlargement. Citizens understand this and want to work to have an EU that is strong, stable and ready for enlargement, even in its decision-making.

Proposal 5 did not have significant modifications presented.

Proposal 6 was also highly debated with many members of the Working Group further supporting the ideas that the EU must be a strong player and assess its relationship with NATO while also considering new defense strategies – all while keeping its identity as a promoter of peace and prosperity at the heart of any defense choices that will be made. Interventions discussed the different stances on NATO membership in different countries. The defense discussion was also put in relation to strategic autonomy. Citizens called for free and fair media where disinformation could be identified and countered. There was a range of views as to the extent and existence of any new type of EU armed forces, but broad agreement that they should be used for defensive purposes.

Proposal 7 saw some broad agreement. Citizens requested that hybrid regimes should also be mentioned along with autocratic regimes. More positive language was urged when discussing EU preparation for enlargement. This discussion also highlighted the need to think broader than just the Western Balkans in terms of enlargement, and it was agreed to use the term ‘candidate and potential candidate countries’, rather than make a list of such countries.

Concluding Remarks

The meeting ran over the allotted time, so interpretation was not available for the last 15 minutes of the discussion. Ms Ahuja indicated that the Common Secretariat would take this debate into consideration and work with the citizens to make any additional modifications to the proposals – the goal being to share updated proposals with the Working Group before making them available to the Plenary debate taking place on Saturday afternoon. Diverging views would be clearly mentioned in the outputs of the working group, as would be the sources for the proposals.