



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

SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on 'Health', Chaired by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President, European Commission

Friday 25 March 2022, 9:00 to 11:30 – 14:00 to 16:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

The fifth meeting of the Working Group was held in hybrid format and was webstreamed on the Conference [Multilingual Digital Platform](#). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss in detail the four draft proposals (“Healthy food and healthy lifestyle”, “Reinforce the healthcare system”, “A broader understanding of Health, Equal access to health for all”), their objectives and specific measures. The Chair said that the Working Group would work on the basis of consensus.

Discussion

Proposal 1: “Healthy food and healthy lifestyles”

The Chair presented the draft proposal, its objectives and specific measures and asked for the citizens’ feedback. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- On specific measure 2:
 - Some members asked to put emphasis on education on healthy habits from the early childhood.
 - A member also felt that existing legislation controlling the use of hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors in the production of food should be strengthened, better monitored and enforced.
 - Different views were expressed on the idea of a compulsory European-wide scoring system for processed food. Some considered that scoring systems set up in some Member States were working well and were useful to inform consumers about the nutritional quality of a product, while a few others took the view that such a system was not easy to implement and that food labelling could be adequate. Several insisted to keep the content of the Recommendation 19 of the European Citizens’ Panel regarding the scoring system.
- On specific measure 3:
 - A member said that support should be provided to implement this provision.

Proposal 2: “Reinforce the healthcare system”

The Chair presented the draft proposal, its objectives and specific measures and asked for the citizens’ feedback. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- On specific measure 1:
 - A member asked to refer to the ongoing work carried out by the Commission on the development of a European Health Data Space to promote better exchange and access to different types of health data and to use the term “the European health data space”
 - A member suggested including the creation of an individual European health ‘passport’ or ‘wallet’, citing examples of similar tools already used in the Member States. Another member expressed concerns about the introduction of such a measure at EU level. Several speakers raised the need for data protection and that access to the passport should remain confidential.

- On specific measure 2:
 - Referring to Recommendation 39, a member asked to add a reference to working hours and to skills’ development. A speaker suggested mentioning collective bargaining to improve working conditions, while another one recalled Member States’ competences on the matter. Some members stressed that the focus of recommendation 39 is on the need to enable cross-border mobility.

- On specific measure 3:
 - Some members suggested replacing a list of “life-saving medicines” by the term “essential and priority medicines”, which should be established by the EMA (European Medicines Agency). Another member suggested to add innovate medicines and treatments.
 - Some members stressed the need to strengthen the existing EU agencies, not to create new ones, and to specifically refer to HERA (European Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority).
 - A member stressed the need to define ‘strategic autonomy’ in a broad sense, encompassing both basic equipment, care and treatment as well capacity-building to enable future cutting-edge treatments.

- On specific measure 4:
 - A member said that a reference to increased funding for ERNs (European Reference Networks) should be included to further develop networks of specialised care. Another member underlined the importance to coordinate national research programmes.

- On specific measures 5 and 6:
 - Some members stressed that the public and the private health sectors should not be treated as opposites but as complementary sources of care. Another member said that a distinction could be made between private “for profit” and “non-for profit” entities. Speakers agreed that health should not be considered as a commercial good, with some suggesting referring to its characteristics, namely accessibility and affordability.
 - A member added that calling for a harmonised financing system would not be realistic since it is subject to subsidiarity. Another member recalled national and sometimes regional and local competences in health matters.

- A member explained that the idea of Recommendation 51 was not to remodel Member States' health systems but for the EU to provide support to national health systems and taking more of a role in healthcare, perhaps through Treaty revision, in order to achieve more equality.

Proposal 3: "A broader understanding of Health"

The Chair presented the draft proposal, its objectives and specific measures and asked for the citizens' feedback. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- On specific measure 1:
 - Several members said that the exchange of best practices on mental health should be wider, i.e. not referring to Members of the European Parliament specifically, and called to develop an action plan or strategy on mental health at EU level, following the model of "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan". Some members underlined the need to increase mental health services, in particular the number of psychologists and help for minors, without the need for parental consent.
 - A member also put the emphasis on both prevention and cure regarding mental health, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic and suggested to organise a year for mental health.
- On specific measure 2:
 - A member asked how Recommendation 4 on bike lanes would be taken forward in the Working Group on Climate Change and the Environment.
 - A speaker underlined that national and regional authorities are competent for educational programmes. However, providing information on mental health and healthy lifestyles could help people, but there should be no obligations nor binding objectives.
 - A speaker said that issues related to mental and sexual health are distinct and should be addressed separately.
- On specific measure 3:
 - A member asked to add a reference to the last part of Recommendation 50 calling for a minimum number of defibrillators available in public places in all EU Member States.

Proposal 4: Equal access to health for all

The Chair presented the draft proposal, its objectives and specific measures and asked for the citizens' feedback. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- On specific measure 1:
 - A member asked for the EU to provide support to Member States to achieve the intended common standards and said that dental care should be moved under specific measure 4.
 - A speaker felt that minimum healthcare standards should also cover prevention.
- On specific measure 2:
 - Several members asked to integrate Recommendation 49 as such and to refer to Treaty changes to include health as a shared competence, with a member saying that this would allow implementing effectively the various recommendations adopted by the citizens.

Another member was opposed to Treaty changes, referring to national and regional competences.

- On specific measure 3:
 - A member asked to include cardio-vascular diseases and highly specialised treatments, such as organ transplants and severe burns. Another member suggested including a reference to creating at European-level information networks of specialised facilities, such as for rare diseases.
- On specific measure 4:
 - A member felt that ensuring affordability of healthcare would require stronger investment in healthcare.
- On specific measure 5:
 - A member asked to include period poverty, baby products and family planning next to female sanitary products.
- On specific measure 6:
 - A member drew the attention to the impact of poor-quality housing on health.

Commissioner Kyriakides intervened in the discussion. She outlined the solidarity measures adopted for Ukraine in the health and food sectors. She stated that the recommendations of Citizens' Panels and the input from the Digital Platform made a strong case for more coordinated action in the areas linked to health and to food safety. She also said that the footprint of the citizens' recommendations should be visible in the final report of the Conference and that the Commission will follow up on all conclusions of the Conference.

2. Concluding remarks of the Chair

The Chair said that he would report on the outcome of the discussion – together with the spokesperson - in the Plenary session of 26 March. He summarised the comments made on the four proposals and said that they would be taken on board in the revised version of the proposals. Regarding Treaty changes, the Chair indicated that he would report to the Plenary and reflect this request in the revised version of the draft proposals. He shared his personal experience on the legal and political complexities of the procedures to amend the Treaties and underlined that a lot can be done, under the current Treaties and within the current legislative mandate, to develop the European Health Union.

The Chair concluded that, based on the comments made, he intends to review, together with the Working Group Spokesperson and the Common secretariat, the draft proposals, and circulate revised drafts ahead of the Plenary of 8 and 9 April.

ANNEX: List of Members of the Working Group on Health

Chair: Maroš ŠEŤŤOVIČ (European Commission)

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Mr	Pascal	ARIMONT	European Parliament
Ms	Alina	BĂRGĂOANU	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Katerina	BAT'HOVÁ	Council
Ms	Linette Eleni	BLANKENSTEINER	European citizens panels
Mr	Leandro	BORG	Council
Ms	Claudette	BUTTIGIEG	National Parliaments
Ms	Anda	ČAKŠA	National Parliaments
Ms	Susanna	CECCARDI	European Parliament
Mr	Roberto	CIAMBETTI	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Alain	COHEUR	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Nathalie	COLIN-OESTERLÉ	European Parliament
Ms	Margarita	DE LA PISA CARRIÓN	European Parliament
Ms	Isabel	DÍAZ AYUSO	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Ines	GASMI	European citizens panels
Ms	Camille	GIRARD	European citizens panels
Ms	Daniela	GÎTMAN	Council
Mr	Ilenia Carmela	GRECO	European citizens panels
Mr	Sebastián	GUILLEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kinga	JOÓ	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Assya	KAVRAKOVA	Civil Society
Ms	Boudraa	MAGHNIA LINDA (MOUSTAKIM)	European citizens panels
Ms	Radka	MAXOVÁ	European Parliament
Ms	Rūta	MILIŪTĒ	National Parliaments
Mr	Alin Cristian	MITUŢA	European Parliament
Ms	Dolors	MONTSERRAT	European Parliament
Mr	Nicolas	MORAVEK	European citizens panels
Mr	Renaud	MUSELIER	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Ewa	NOWACKA	Council
Ms	Ria	OOMEN-RUIJTEN	National Parliaments
Mr	Dimitrios	PAPADIMOULIS	European Parliament
Ms	Troels de Leon	PETERSEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Mark	PLEŠKO	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Jean-François	RAPIN	National Parliaments
Mr	Ivo	RASO	European citizens panels

Ms	Michèle	RIVASI	European Parliament
Ms	Valeria	RONZITTI	Social Partners
Ms	Christa	SCHWENG	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Maroš	ŠEFČOVIČ	European Commission
Ms	Elisaveta	SIMEONOVA	Council
Mr	Ivan Vilibor	SINČIĆ	European Parliament
Ms	Niamh	SMYTH	National Parliaments
Ms	Paola	TAVERNA	National Parliaments
Mr	Louis	TELEMACHOU	Council
Mr	Jesús	TERUEL TERUEL	European citizens panels
Mr	Zoltán	TESSELY	National Parliaments
Ms	Patrizia	TOIA	European Parliament
Ms	Kathleen	VAN BREMPT	European Parliament
Ms	Anna	VIKSTRÖM	National Parliaments
Mr	Claude	WISELER	National Parliaments