The future is in your hands

Make your voice heard

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

Citizens' panel to formulate recommendations for the Conference on the Future of Europe, 11-12 March 2022

Summary Report

Rome, 16 March 2022

SWG

# Table of Contents

# 1. Guiding Principles of the Panel Organisation Process

The whole process of panel implementation was designed to comply with the indications of the Guidance for National Citizens' Panels in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Specifically:

- **Purpose:**
  All those invited to take part in the panel filled in a participation questionnaire indicating the objectives and aims of the project, with specific references to the Conference on the Future of Europe, the topics covered and the methods of engagement.

- **Transparency:**
  All materials for the presentation of the initiative were made available to participants through a variety of means, always referring to the official website of the Conference and emailing the materials to all participants.

- **Inclusiveness:**
  The invitation to participate was conveyed in a variety of ways, such as: an email invitation to members of the SWG Community as well as the dissemination of links to fill in the application form via Twitter and Linkedin. This generated a total of over 400 accesses to the application form and 245 applications. The selection of participants (based on randomness) was carried out in such a way as to ensure the presence of people of different genders, ages, social backgrounds, places of residence and employment status.

- **Representativeness:**
  Although the size of the sample is not representative in the statistical sense, the mechanism for constructing the sample was designed to achieve maximum heterogeneity amongst the participants in order to reproduce a microcosm of the target audience.

- **Information:**
  All participants were provided with an extensive set of information about both the Conference and the topics discussed during the panel. In the introductory section, the objectives and modalities of the project were reiterated according to the principles of neutrality and completeness. All participants were given the opportunity to ask for more information and details about the event through the direct telephone numbers of SWG's project managers.

- **Deliberation Groups:**
  The key objective of the entire process was the formulation of concrete recommendations addressed to the European Union, broadly shared by the participants. The working approach and the way the groups were led resulted in a process centred on the collection of participants' indications, their elaboration and synthesis as well as their verification and validation by the groups themselves through a subsequent working session.

- **Timing:**
  A relaxed atmosphere was created during the working sessions, giving the participants plenty of time to explore the issues on which they were asked to deliberate, express their opinions and listen to those of others. For the same reason, it was decided to divide the two main groups into two subgroups. The work was also spread over two days so as to allow a proper sedimentation of the considerations that emerged.

- **Follow up:**
  The last day of work saw all the panels engaged in a verification and validation process of the first draft of the recommendations elaborated during the first phase of the work. Once the report on the results had been delivered to the Department for European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the relevant authorisation had been received, the final version of the recommendations was shared with all the panel participants. In all cases, participants were invited to continue to follow the activities of the Conference through the website and the updates that will be published.
- **Integrity:**
  The entire work process was conducted in full autonomy by SWG, according to the assignment received. The Department for European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was constantly informed about the different steps of the initiative and the results that were being achieved.
- **Privacy:**
  The privacy of participants was fully guaranteed. In order to be admitted to the panel, all candidates had to sign the informed consent required by law.
- **Assessment:**
  At the end of the process, a questionnaire was administered to all participants to evaluate their experience, the results of which are summarised in this report.

# 2. Participants' Selection and Engagement Procedures

The Selection

The aim of the pre-event communication phase was to recruit at least 50 Italian citizens interested in participating in the initiative.

To this end, a short self-application form was set up: a questionnaire to be filled in online on SWG's proprietary platform, in which all those interested in participating in the initiative could apply by indicating the minimum data necessary for their placement in the clusters from which participants were randomly drawn. The necessary conditions for participation were the availability of an internet connection, a device equipped with a microphone and video camera as well as the signing of the Conference Charter.

The application form was disseminated through social networks from SWG's accounts. To this end, 6 posts were made on Twitter and 1 on Linkedin with the following results:

| Social network | Dates | Number of views | Access to the application link |
|---|---|---|---|
| Twitter | 6 posts between 8 and 10 March | 889 | 31 |
| Linkedin | 1 post on 8 March | 410 | 2 5 |

At the same time, members of the SWG Community were invited to apply, according to an invitation strategy aimed at guaranteeing maximum representation of the Italian population, not only in terms of socio-anagraphical characteristics, but also in terms of ideas, cultural orientations and values.

Applications were held between 8 a.m. on 8 March and 4 p.m. on 10 March 2022, resulting in a total of 420 accesses to the application form and 225 completed applications.

A total of **140** people were actually eligible, from which 70 were selected according to a criterion aimed at ensuring a balanced presence of subjects in terms of gender, geographical distribution, age and educational qualifications.
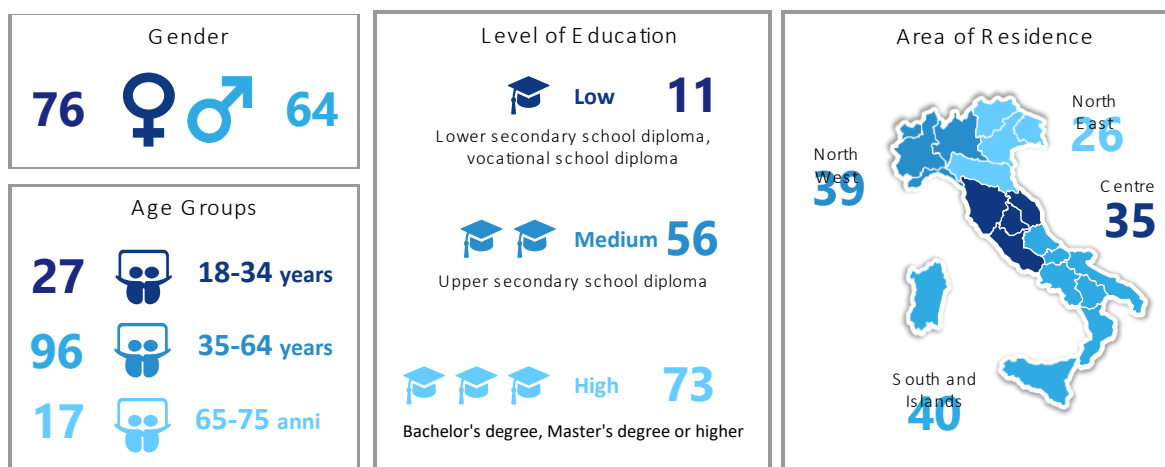
In the candidate selection procedure, particular care was paid to operating according to a principle of fair probability for selection amongst participants, with procedures based on a criterion of conditional randomness.

The randomness of the draw was a central element of the project to ensure fairness in the access process. However, in the spirit of the initiative, it seemed important to put in place a strategy not only to involve the maximum number of subjects possible, but also to ensure maximum heterogeneity of the selected subjects in order to promote maximum inclusiveness.

In summary, the distribution of those eligible to participate was as follows:

## Distribution of eligible candidates

### 140

| Gender | | |
|---|---|---|
| 76 ♀ ♂ 64 | | |

| Level of Education | | |
|---|---|---|
| Low | 11 | Lower secondary school diploma, vocational school diploma |
| Medium | 56 | Upper secondary school diploma |
| High | 73 | Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or higher |

| Area of Residence |
|---|
| North West 39 |
| North East 26 |
| Centre 35 |
| South and Islands 40 |

| Age Groups | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | 18-34 years | |
| 96 | 35-64 years | |
| 17 | 65-75 anni | |

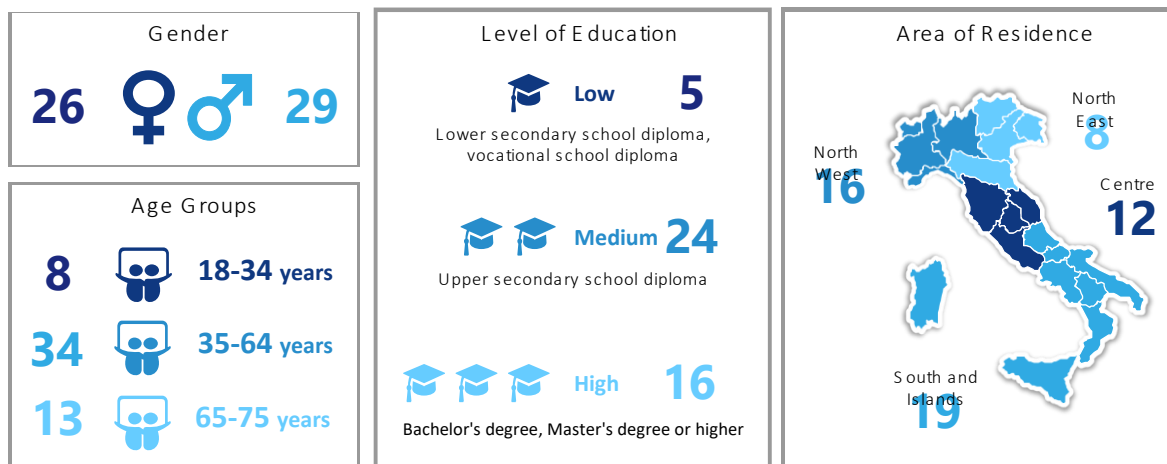SWG — Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa

Once the 70 candidates had been drawn and, on the morning of the event, telephone calls were made to those identified to confirm their participation. The recall was carried out by SWG's proprietary CATI Contact Centre. Overall, at the end of this phase, 59 subjects were registered and confirmed their participation. **Of these, 55 took an active part in the panel.**

The social and age composition of the panel was as follows:

# Distribution of actual participants

## 55

### Gender

26 ♀ ♂ 29

### Age Groups

8    18-34 years

34    35-64 years

13    65-75 years

### Level of Education

**Low**   5

Lower secondary school diploma,
vocational school diploma

**Medium** 24

Upper secondary school diploma

**High**   16

Bachelor's degree, Master's degree or higher

### Area of Residence

North
East

North
West

8

16

Centre

12

South and
Islands

19

**SWG**   Conferenza sul **futuro** dell'Europa

At a glance, these are the results of the recruitment process:

# The application process flow

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access to application form | 420 | *8-10 March 2022* |
| Complete applications | 225 | *10 March 2022* |
| Eligible candidates | 140 | *10 March 2022* |
| Admitted to the panel | 70 | *11 March 2022* |
| Active participants | 55 | *11-12 March 2022* |

**SWG**   Conferenza sul **futuro** dell'Europa

To ensure a high level of motivation and participation from the very first engagement, the following materials were made available to all participants:

- **The presentation sheets of the Conference on the Future of Europe and of the national panels.**
- **The Future of Europe Conference Charter.**
- **The themes of the topics that would be discussed during the panels.**
- **The technical and organisational information required for participation.**

# 3. Panel Organisation

In order to maximise the participation of people with work commitments, the panel was structured on two consecutive half-days, including a public holiday, according to the following schedule:

- **Friday 11 March from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**
- **Saturday 12 March from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

On the one hand, this decision was intended to facilitate workers' participation in the initiative and, on the other hand, break up the commitment to participation by encouraging greater attention and involvement, with also greater deliberation on the issues and proposals presented.

The panel participants accessed the two working sessions through the GoToMeeting platform and were divided into 4 groups (two for each thematic area), led by a SWG moderator and with the presence of a transcriber to take the minutes of the interventions. The moderators led the groups through two different discussion tracks (one for each thematic area), aiming to involve all participants as much as possible and ensuring an approach based on maximum inclusion and neutrality.

# 4. The Work Agenda

First Session (Friday 11 March 2022)

- 3:00 p.m.- Opening of the connection and opportunity for participants to connect to the platform as well as check the functioning of their audio and video systems.
- 4.00 p.m. - Introduction by the Moderator: illustration of the reasons behind the initiative and the structure of the work.
- 4:15 p.m.- Breakdown of participants into groups based on the preferences indicated in the application phase.
- 4:20 p.m. - Start of group discussion.
- 8:00 p.m.- End of session.

## Second Session (Saturday, 12 March 2022)

- • 10.00 - Resumption of work with reading of the results of the first day's work.
- • 10.15 - Continuation of the discussion, insights and comments from the participants.
- • 12.00 - End of work.
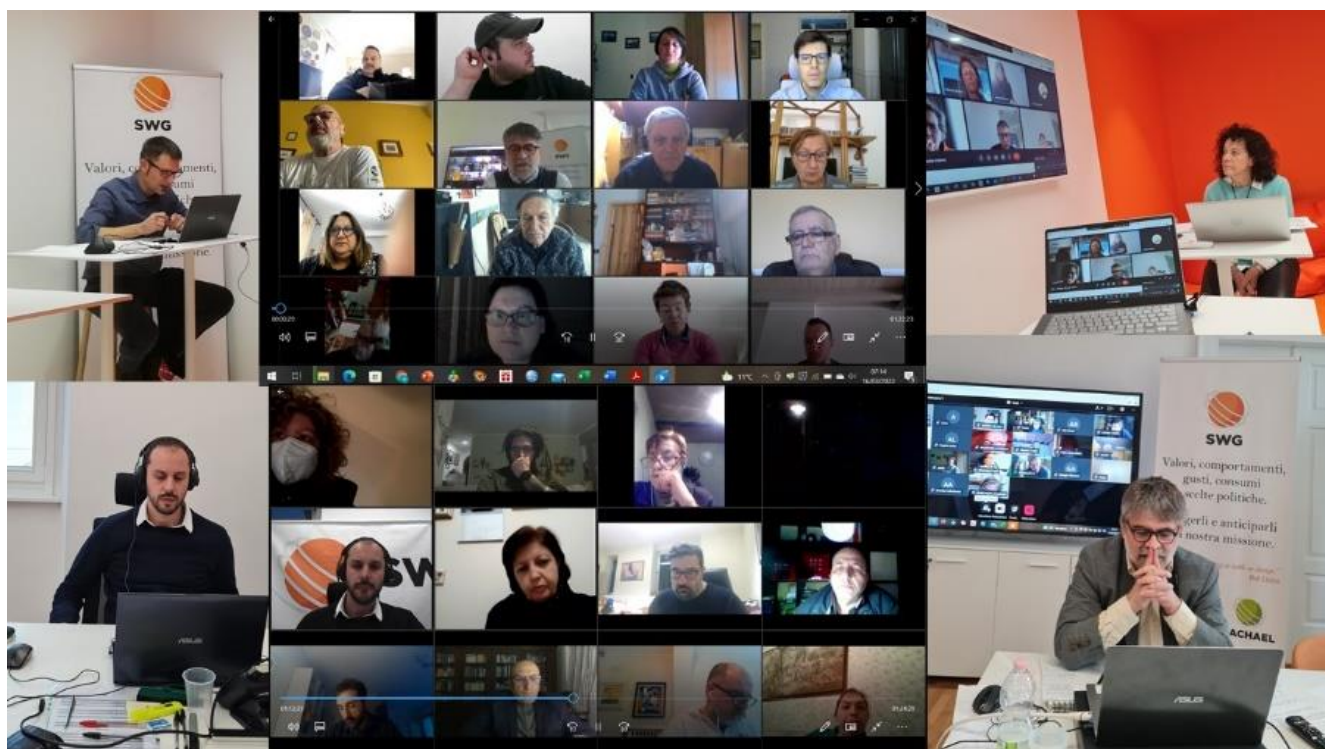
# 5. Recommendations Collected

## € A Stronger Economy, Social Justice, and Jobs

### 1. Overcoming the 20th Century Production Model

The perception of the panel participants is that the latest world events (the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine) have forcefully shown the limits of the current European productive model and have highlighted the need to revise an approach that many describe as being "twentieth century".

The evidence of Europe's dependence on energy and food purchased from countries outside of the European Union, as well as the discovery (during the pandemic) that we are not able to produce the quantity of medical devices and vaccines needed to combat the advance of the virus on our own, have led to the perception of a fundamental weakness in our economic system linked to a lack of self-sufficiency.

At the same time, there is a clear perception that a stronger economy, capable of creating jobs in a context of social justice, must have strong assets in terms of technology. In order to do this, it is essential to support an education system that is increasingly focused on STEM subjects.

**Technological innovation, sustainable energy, but also tourism and culture** appear to be three fundamental directions for the development of the European economy of the future, with a specific focus on maintaining basic production to avoid the risk of excessive dependence on non-EU countries for the supply of essential products and raw materials.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Tackling climate change and alternative energies effectively.**
2. **Investing in an economy based on tourism and culture, including the many small destinations in Europe.**
3. **Focusing on technology and innovation as drivers of growth.**
4. **Reducing dependence on other countries for raw materials, energy sources and agriculture.**
5. **Encouraging young people to study science subjects.**

---

## 2. Generative and Inclusive Productive Regulations

Overcoming the economic organisation of the twentieth century also requires a review of the rules and procedures for regulating business activity. There are four recommendations in this direction, which share a common logic: on the one hand, simplifying the rules and, on the other hand, maintaining a high level of vigilance against misconduct (particularly with regard to counterfeiting and unfair competition).

Great attention is paid to the need for economic rules to be generative first and foremost, reducing as far as possible those choices that impose a standardisation of production processes (jeopardising specific local products with deep cultural roots), but also the destruction of agricultural assets due to the need to maintain predefined production quantities.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Reducing bureaucracy (permits, certifications).**
2. **Reducing the standardisation of products and recognising local and regional cultural and production peculiarities (respect for production traditions).**
3. **Overcoming the logic of "fixed quotas" in agricultural production, with the relative destruction of excess produce.**
4. **Combating counterfeiting and unfair competition.**

---

## 3. Measuring Growth in People's Happiness and Not in the Quantity of Products

Overcoming the twentieth-century production model does not only mean changing production methods, but also entering into a new culture in which growth indicators are not just centred on the quantity of goods produced, but on the ability to ensure that citizens achieve a goal of happiness. In the new economy, the key subject around which to judge impact and investment cannot be goods but must be people. This implies the need to move from a system of indicators based on the quantity of goods produced (GDP) to a system capable of measuring the well-being produced on people (GDH - gross domestic happiness).

---

### RECOMMENDATION AT A GLANCE

1. **Developing an economy centred more on the production of happiness (Gross Domestic Happiness) than on goods (Gross Domestic Product).**

---

SWG

## 4. Greater Integration Amongst States

What is clear to everyone, even to those who are less satisfied with the current set-up and the results achieved so far by the European Union, is that monetary union is not enough, and that Europe must be able to move with increasing strength as a cohesive political entity, able to negotiate externally with one voice and to act with greater solidarity internally. Greater union is a key aspect of increasing the political, commercial and productive strength of the European Union: homogeneity of fundamental laws as well as an integrated and cohesive system of taxation of businesses and citizens, where wages and services to citizens are aligned. Only in this way will we have a Europe capable of reducing social differences and promoting quality of life.

This means not moving backwards on the achievements of recent years and preserving the concept of welfare, indicated by the participants in the panel as the most advanced in the world and the most careful to guarantee equal opportunities and social justice to its citizens.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Do not compromise on welfare rights (public health, public education, labour policies).**
2. **Consolidate what has been done in terms of the single currency and the interconnection of payment systems and telecommunications.**

---

Today, however, all that has been done in the past no longer seems sufficient, and the Europe of the future needs to make a definitive leap forward in terms of integration amongst Member States, according to an internal vision that is no longer based on competition, but on cooperation, which puts every European citizen in a position to have the same systems of guarantees and opportunities in all the Member States of the Union.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Overcoming the self-interest of individual States and the tendency to seek individual advantages to the detriment of others.**
2. **Establishing a system that provides for the same laws, taxation systems, rights and duties in all countries.**
3. **Coordinating tax regimes amongst the different States, especially concerning companies (no free zones or low taxation).**
4. **Coherent prices of products and a guarantee of equal purchasing power across the different States.**
5. **Reducing wage disparities across the different States and the geographical regions within them.**
6. **Making the public debt of various Member States a common responsibility.**

---

## 5. Inclusion Policies

A Europe that is fair and capable of offering happiness to its citizens is an inclusive Europe, which always maintains a high level of attention to combating inequalities. The recommendations set a course for achieving long-cherished goals (such as gender equality), and mark out new requirements linked to the cultural transformations of contemporary societies (digital inequalities and the right to live in a healthy environment).

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE**

1. **Achieving full gender equality, including by strengthening paternal parental leave and childcare facilities.**
2. **Tackling digital inequalities.**
3. **Ensuring that all European citizens can live in a healthy and sustainable environment.**
4. **Ensuring the opportunity of social mobility and, therefore, to have a full chance of self-realisation and self-determination.**
5. **Promoting generational change at all levels.**
6. **Managing the reception of refugees and migrants in a balanced way across the different States.**

---

Once again, the role of schools and educational policies appears to be central, not only to provide young people with the skills they need to enter the labour market, but also to build a European culture. After building a Europe of institutions, it is essential to build a Europe of peoples. From this point of view, the centrality of a common language is emphasised to enable dialogue between citizens of different countries and equal access to services. The dream of Esperanto having collapsed, the UK's departure from the European Union has raised doubts about the possibility of adopting English as a shared language, a key idiom in international relations as well as within the scientific and economic system.

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE**

1. **Promoting the adoption of a common language.**
2. **Investing in schools and the teaching the history of Europe rather than of individual nations as well as political economy and civic education.**
3. **Access to culture, education and exchanges between students and citizens of the different Member States**

---

Inclusion policies have an essential component in guaranteeing access to opportunities for citizens. The participants in the panel, from this point of view, underlined how Italy has often been unable to use the European funds made available for this purpose. Inclusion and accessibility mean that European institutions are closer to their citizens, and more information and awareness about the rights that European citizens have as such. From this point of view, the importance of a direct relationship between the Union's institutions and citizens emerged, without necessarily being mediated by the Member States.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Promoting the use of European funds for reducing inequalities.**
2. **Accessibility and proximity of European institutions to citizens.**
3. **Encouraging direct access by citizens as well as communicating their rights and opportunities clearly.**

---

## 6. Employment

II The issue of employment consistently emerged as a cross-cutting element and a direct effect of the European Union's ability to follow through on its recommendations. In the debate amongst participants, it was clear that the issue of employment was central to people's lives, but that it could not be pursued without strengthening economic and social justice issues. The strong expectation is for a European Union in which active labour policies remain central and increasingly coordinated.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Promoting exchanges between workers in Europe through a European Job Centre.**
2. **Having integrated employment policies at an EU level.**
3. **Providing incentives for companies that offer employment.**

---

Recent international events and, particularly, the war between Russia and Ukraine, have had a profound impact on the perception of the role that Europe should play internationally.

The recommendations collected essentially focused on an axis that aims to strengthen the Union (both in terms of identity and as an economic force) and position it as a model of reference and stimulus in its relations with other countries.

| Strengthening the European Identity | Strengthening the Economy and Institutions | Cooperation and Partnerships | Political and Cultural Reference Point |
|---|---|---|---|

## 1. Strengthening the European Identity

In order to be recognised outside of its borders, the European Union must first of all be internally cohesive, not only economically and financially, but also in terms of identity and values. An identity that is not created through homologation, but through the enhancement of local specificities within a framework of shared essential values.

In this respect, there is also a consideration of a potential enlargement of the Union's perimeter which, according to some of the panel participants, should not be done in an indiscriminate manner, but instead focus on mutual cultural and value recognition rather than on economic standards.

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Enhancement of European values, cultural traits as well as regional specificities.**
2. **Creation of an institute for European culture to foster a culture of respect and cross-fertilisation between citizens of different States.**
3. **Redefinition of the principles of belonging for new candidate countries, with a strengthening of factors such as cultural identity and values.**

---

SWG

## 2. Strengthening the Economy and Institutions

The Europe of the future is called upon to play a leading role at international level, and this role can only be taken on when the Union is strong and independent of other countries. There is widespread awareness that the countries of the Union are poor in raw materials, but it seems essential that the Union should be able to guarantee greater independence in terms of energy supplies, agriculture and technological products.

This requires precise investments to catch up in areas such as technology (where the European Union does not currently seem to have a leading role), but also in the food and energy sectors.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has also brought back to the centre of the debate the importance of an integrated European defence policy, with a specific identity and greater autonomy with respect to NATO, whose membership is not in question.

Finally, it entails precise choices for the future, with a strong investment in science and research to increase the skills of young Europeans.

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE**

1. **Strengthening domestic production capacity: food chain (especially wheat) and technology (microchips).**
2. **Enhancing typical regional and European products.**
3. **Strengthening European industrial clusters (e.g. steel).**
4. **Strengthening local energy production from a green perspective (gas, solar, wind).**
5. **Developing aerospace technologies.**
6. **Creating European scientific laboratories (European Virus Bank).**
7. **Creating a common European Army acting within the framework of NATO, but also helping to go beyond it.**
8. **Investing in the training of trainers (European exchanges for teachers, Erasmus for teachers).**
9. **Increasing the mobility of European researchers by developing new Community scientific institutions.**
10. **Promoting the emergence of innovative start-ups.**

---

## 3. Cooperation and Partnerships

The Europe of the future is not seen as a fortress defending its wealth, but as a protagonist on the international stage which is capable of dialogue with all the countries of the world. A dialogue that starts from a commercial power and should aim at economic leadership, which can be consolidated through the building of partnerships and projects of great international scope.

All this with a view to cooperation and attention to less secure areas of the world, with ad hoc projects to promote the poorest countries, as well as cultural and economic exchange with the countries of the East.

Specific attention is also paid to the issue of migration, with greater coordination across the different states and using shared procedures for managing requests and people.

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE**

1. **Boosting exports.**
2. **Promoting transnational European tourist routes.**
3. **Developing a commercial system of negotiations at a European level (not as individual States or companies, but as a Union) to have greater bargaining power, but with also constraints linked to the respect of human rights.**
4. **Carrying out major international projects such as the International Space Station.**
5. **Financing projects in Africa to build schools and hospitals without a colonial attitude and instead aiming at respect for European rights and values.**
6. **Investing in on-site training (especially for women) in the poorest countries.**
7. **Promoting exchanges of technicians and trainers.**
8. **Building a system of common rules for the access of migrants, with different processes between humanitarian and economic migrations and fair distribution across the different States with common rules (census and control of behaviour and employment).**

---

## 4. Political and Cultural Reference Point

In the scenario outlined above, Europe is called upon to represent a clear political and cultural reference point at world level from the point of view of rights and ethics, setting an example by making decisions aimed at guaranteeing a healthy environment, respect for people's rights and dialogue between East and West.
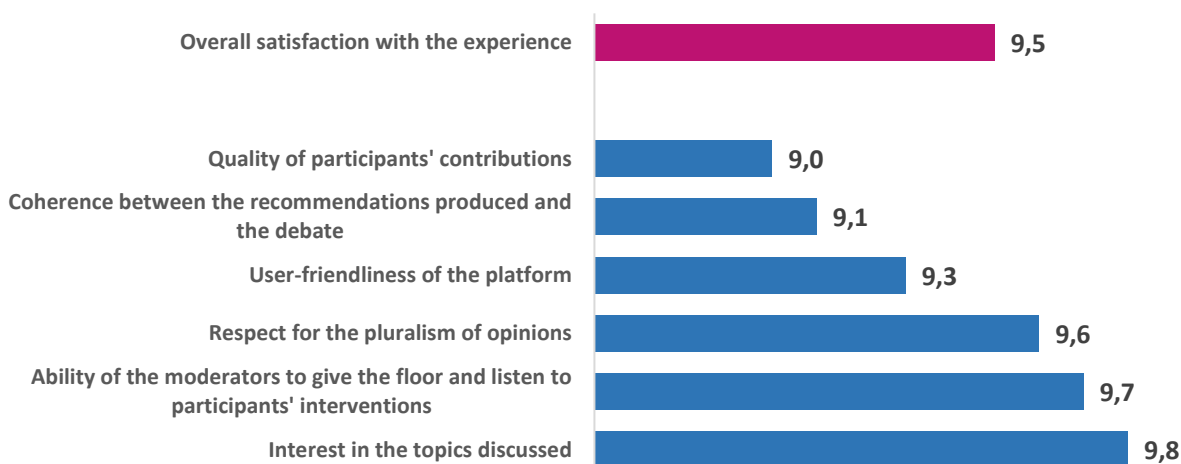
---

### RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

1. **Leading the way as a green continent, achieving zero emissions before others and increasing clean energy production (wind and solar).**
2. **Exporting technologies to produce zero-impact goods.**
3. **Acting as a confluence (a public place, an agora) between East and West, promoting cultural exchanges and joint cultural initiatives (such as the World Art Days, to be held in rotation in the various European capitals and with an artistic programme that includes Western and Eastern artists).**
4. **Creating a European ethical model to manage migration processes which is to be shared internationally.**

---

# 6. Final Evaluation by Participants

At the end of the two days of work, all participants were invited to fill in a short questionnaire to evaluate their experience. The evaluation questionnaire was sent out two days after the end of the panel to give all participants time to digest the experience and give balanced feedback.

The results collected show a particularly high level of satisfaction, both in terms of interest and from the point of view of ease of participation and the perception of listening and inclusion.
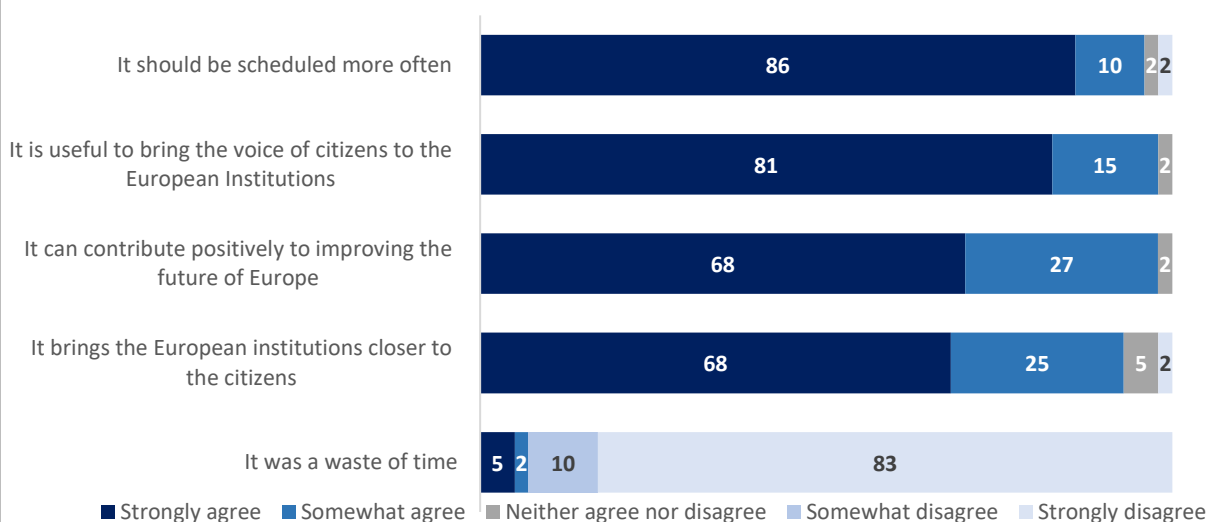
**SATISFACTION FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PANEL**

| | |
|---|---|
| Overall satisfaction with the experience | 9,5 |
| Quality of participants' contributions | 9,0 |
| Coherence between the recommendations produced and the debate | 9,1 |
| User-friendliness of the platform | 9,3 |
| Respect for the pluralism of opinions | 9,6 |
| Ability of the moderators to give the floor and listen to participants' interventions | 9,7 |
| Interest in the topics discussed | 9,8 |

Although starting from different experiences, skills and motivations, the participants felt strongly involved: 98% of the respondents to the evaluation questionnaire felt that they had participated actively and made a positive contribution to the debate.

In general, there was a very strong perception of the usefulness of this experience, which was perceived above all as an opportunity for active participation and produced a sense of greater closeness to the Community institutions. This led to almost all the respondents to ask for this type of initiative to be repeated over time.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE "ITALIAN PANEL FOR THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE"**

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It should be scheduled more often | 86 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| It is useful to bring the voice of citizens to the European Institutions | 81 | 15 | 2 | | |
| It can contribute positively to improving the future of Europe | 68 | 27 | 2 | | |
| It brings the European institutions closer to the citizens | 68 | 25 | 5 | 2 | |
| It was a waste of time | 5 | 2 | 10 | | 83 |

All participants indicated that if such an initiative were to be organised again, they would not only participate willingly, but also recommend their friends to participate.