



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

## SUMMARY RECORD

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

**Friday 21 January 2022, 14:00 to 16:00**

### **1. Introductory remarks of the Chair**

The third meeting of the Working Group was held in hybrid format and was webstreamed on the Conference [Multilingual Digital Platform](#). The Chair, Mr Maroš Šefčovič, started the meeting by saying that the Working Group would discuss the 17 health-related recommendations adopted by European Citizens' Panel 3 and the relevant recommendations from the National Citizens' Panels that have concluded their work. He also invited the Members who contributed on the Multilingual Digital Platform to present their ideas. He informed the Working Group Members that – together with the Working Group spokesperson – he would report the day after to the Conference Plenary on the outcome of the discussion.

### **2. Discussion**

- Four representatives of European Citizens' Panel 3 presented 17 health-related recommendations which were grouped under the following clusters: "Healthy food", "Reinforce the healthcare system", "A broader understanding of Health", and "Equal access to health for all". They stressed in particular:
  - The need to reinforce healthcare systems and EU competences in this field;
  - The importance to achieve equal access to healthcare;
  - The need to invest more into health research, to set up common health databases and to focus more on health prevention, in particular on mental health;
  - The request to set standards for healthy food, e.g. by promoting organic food, improving traceability and transparency and by controlling the use of antibiotics in animal feed.
- Citizens' representatives of France and the Netherlands presented the recommendations of their respective national citizens' panels in the field of health:
  - The representative of the French National Panel pleaded to harmonise healthcare to make it accessible to all Europeans through a common healthcare policy, to develop a proper nutritional

- scoring and labelling and to reinforce EU sovereignty through the reindustrialisation of the health sector in the EU.
- The representative of the Dutch National Panel called to take greater control of pandemic-countermeasures, for better coordination at EU level, while considering that healthcare should remain primarily a national matter. She also underlined the need to provide affordable and reliable medicines for everyone.
- The discussions concentrated around the following topics:
    - Some Members underlined the need to strengthen coordination mechanisms at EU level as well as the resilience of healthcare systems and to capitalise on the experience gained during the Covid-19 pandemic.
    - Others raised the need to achieve equal access to healthcare and to develop minimum health standards at EU level.
    - Some others spoke about the efforts to be made to prevent bottlenecks on the supply chains in the pharmaceutical industry and to reduce our dependence on third countries as regards the production of medicinal products and ingredients.
    - Some speakers stressed the need to invest in health infrastructures and to promote digital health.
    - The importance of prevention was mentioned by several speakers. The links between food and health were underlined. Different views were expressed on the issue of nutritional profiles. Actions addressing risk factors such as tobacco and harmful alcohol consumption were considered as key in the fight against cancer.
    - Mental health was mentioned as an issue of great concern for citizens. Some said that initiatives to tackle rare diseases and cardio-vascular diseases were also very important.
    - Referring to the recommendation on the extension of the competences of the EMA, one member emphasised the need for a public agency – or an extension of the current one - focusing on medical and pharmaceutical research.
    - Divergent views were expressed on the recommendation to include health as a shared competence. Some recalled Article 168 TFEU and saw no ground to go beyond the current legal framework, while others said that the idea could not be rejected.
  - Some Members raised the issue of the working methods and of the next steps to be followed, calling to further structure the Working Group discussions and a few suggesting to work on a written documents. Some said that the Recommendations should be transformed into concrete proposals. Some others suggested to screen the Recommendations into categories, i.e. recommendations on which the EU has already done something, recommendations that could be dealt with through existing EU legislation, and finally, recommendations requiring long-term actions and involving new measures.
  - Commissioner Kyriakides intervened remotely. She outlined current and future EU initiatives in the field of health (in particular, the proposal to create a European Health data space planned in April 2022, and the proposal for a new pharmaceutical strategy planned at the end of 2022). The Commissioner expressed the Commissions' commitment to deliver on health policies. On the division

of competences, she said that the Commission would wait for the conclusions of the Conference before taking any formal position. However, she underlined that action to reinforce EU Health policy is currently possible without necessarily changing the Treaties.

- Some citizens' representatives of European Citizens' Panels underlined that while being aware, thanks to the intervention of experts and fact-checkers, that an EU law already exist on a specific issue, they decided nevertheless to adopt a recommendation, considering that the scope of the law was not broad enough or that its implementation was not working in practice. Some citizens' representatives also asked other Members to react on all the recommendations.

### 3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

Concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked the citizens for their recommendations and said that they were taken very seriously. He also thanked all Members for their contributions and summarised the interventions and suggestions made. He mentioned in particular the role of the future European Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). In view of the next meeting, the Chair suggested to come back with background information indicating for each Recommendation what already exists, what is currently planned and new areas where more could be done in the short-term and in the long-term. He mentioned that he would come back to Members with a working method for the next meetings.

#### ANNEX: List of members of the Working Group on Health

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Mr	Pascal	ARIMONT	European Parliament
Ms	Alina	BÂRGĂOANU	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Katerina	BAT'HOVÁ	Council
Ms	Linette Eleni	BLANKENSTEINER	European citizens panels
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	Katarzyna	DRAŹEK- LASKOWSKA	Council

Ms	Ines	GASMI	European citizens panels
Ms	Camille	GIRARD	European citizens panels
Ms	<b>Daniela</b>	<b>GĪTMAN</b>	Council
Mr	Ilenia Carmela	GRECO	European citizens panels
Mr	Sebastián	GUILLEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kinga	JOÓ	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Philippa	KARSERA	Council
Ms	Boudraa	MAGHNIA LINDA (MOUSTAKIM)	European citizens panels
Ms	Radka	MAXOVÁ	European Parliament
Ms	Rūta	MILIŪTĒ	National Parliaments
Mr	Alin Cristian	MITUȚA	European Parliament
Ms	Dolors	MONTSERRAT	European Parliament
Mr	Nicolas	MORAVEK	European citizens panels
Mr	Renaud	MUSELIER	Local/Regional representative
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	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
Mr	Stefan	ZRINZO AZZOPARDI	Council