



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

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD **Working Group on EU in the World**

Chaired by Hans Dahlgren, Minister for European Affairs, Sweden
21 January 2022, 14:00-16:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

Chair Dahlgren opened this hybrid meeting remotely from Stockholm and asked Richard Corbett from the Conference Common Secretariat to assist him with calling speakers in the room. He recalled that, in preparing this meeting, he had encouraged citizen members to submit subjects and questions for the discussion, which he had then distributed with the agenda. Based on these suggestions, he proposed to divide the discussion (which is ahead of receiving concrete recommendations from the citizens' panels) into three streams, with a half-hour discussion on each, in which citizen members of the WG would have priority:

Stream 1: Self-reliance and stability

Stream 2: The EU as an international Partner

Stream 3: A Strong EU in a Peaceful World

2. Brief presentation of instruments and institutions for EU on the global stage.

In the absence of Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative and Vice President of the Commission, who could not join the WG meeting, the Chair made this presentation himself, outlining the key components of the EU's external relations, how they operate, and how decisions are taken.

3. Discussionⁱ

Stream 1: Self-reliance and stability

(4 citizen questions received)

Citizens brought up the concept of the EU as a strong international partner on trade and on political relations, leveraging its collective strength for the promotion of European values abroad, with trade policy keeping human rights, social and environmental values at the heart of all efforts. Prosperous trade with other large players like China and the USA was also of interest. The need for a stronger security and defence policy – with consideration of the possibility of a joint army, and combined efforts on cyber security, was mentioned.

In response, the debate focused on:

- the need to leverage trade agreements
- the need to secure raw materials and energy self-sufficiency
- food supply
- European Union foreign diplomacy, work of EEAS and HRVP



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Chair Dahlgren summed up the discussion by recalling that the landing zone is supposed to be a report that will reflect what the citizens have been contributing. It should be current and be based on what the citizens have raised.

Stream 2: EU as an International Partner

(2 citizen questions, Values and standards focused)

Citizens brought up the need for monitoring and ensuring existing rules are better respected. They also reflected on the need for more expert opinions to better inform citizens on certain topics.

In the debate, several objectives were emphasised:

- The EU can bring about international change as a global actor (Paris Climate Change agreement example of EU being able to use its collective strength to sway US and China). Trade agreements can also be used to promote change and better adherence to protection of basic human rights
- Leading by example, taking the Green Deal seriously and not falling short of its commitments
- A rules based international order must be at the heart of EU objectives
- The EU should leverage its regulatory powers as a global standard setter
- The EU must act globally but also at regional and neighbourhood levels

The Chair concluded stream 2 with this reflection: There were many ways to promote EU values in the global arena, but one challenge is that few people are aware of them all.

Stream 3: A strong EU in a peaceful world

There was a continued citizen interest in Frontex – its function and how it can be further utilized. In the debate, WG members underlined in particular:

- The need for common positions in multiple areas like tax and business regulation
- The importance of engaging the Western Balkans
- The need to take in new members and further expand Schengen.
- The need for an EU defence force, and/or to strengthen work with NATO, or simply to establish an EU defence fund and a rapid deployment capacity
- The need for QMV to expedite decision-making and to avoid the EU being paralysed by the need for unanimity

4. Concluding remarks of the Chair

Chair Dahlgren thanked WG members, and especially the citizen members, for their contributions.

In response to a suggestion that recommendations should be classified (“traffic light” system) in accordance with how easy they would be to implement, he said he will take this idea with him to the Executive Board where this will be discussed, but he also highlighted the difficulties in reaching agreement on such classifications. He again stressed the need for citizen representatives to take up more space in this debate.

He announced that the final European Citizens’ Panel on this subject will be held in Maastricht on 11, 12 and 13 February – the panel will then finalise its recommendations for presentation in the following Plenary. Friday 11 March is the next meeting of this working group. We will use the



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outcomes of the ECP as a structure for that meeting. The group WhatsApp will further facilitate discussion up to the next meeting on 11 March.

ⁱ The breakdown of interventions was as follows:

European Citizen panellists: 9

National panel/event representatives: 4

Civil society (SP, CoR, EESC): 6

Council: 4

National parliaments: 11

EP: 7

Commission: 0

Gender balance: 30 male 11 female interventions