



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

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

Chaired by Silja Markkula, President of the European Youth Forum

Thursday 7 April 2022, 18h00-20h00

### 1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

The meeting took place in a hybrid format and was webstreamed (recording available [here](#)). After welcoming participants, the Chair explained that the meeting will focus on revised draft proposals, which have been prepared based on discussions in the Working Group. She added that recommendations from the Italian National Citizens' Panel have been taken into account in the document, notably in clusters 1 and 3.

### 2. Intervention by the Spokesperson

The Spokesperson of the Working Group expressed her overall support to the draft proposals and explained the changes made that would especially matter to the participants in the European Citizen Panel. She pointed out that changes should not result in moving too far away from the Citizens Panel recommendations, for example as regards the ban of unpaid internships or the minimum voting age.

### 3. Presentation and discussion on the draft proposals with a view to their presentation to the Plenary on 8 April

The Chair declared that following multiple requests at the previous meeting, sport should be a cluster on its own. She proposed to move cluster by cluster by explaining first the changes giving then the floor to participants for further comments. Along the debate, Ms Signe Ratso intervened in the name of the European Commission, notably to draw attention to already launched initiatives. Participants mostly expressed their support to the draft proposals and made following additional remarks:

Regarding the cluster on education:

- In the objective, a reference to the importance of life-long learning in rural areas could be added.
- On the coordination of education programmes, a framework of shared competences (especially for civic education), that would take into consideration all levels of government involved in education policy should be included (on coordination versus harmonisation, the Italian version should be rectified).
- Under the measure on future-proof education and life-long learning, ideas raised included: specifying *free* training in the work place, changing STEM to STEAM to include humanities and putting entrepreneurship and economic literacy together in a sub-point. A participant proposed to

mention "environmental *sustainability*" and to specify that media literacy "ongoing programmes should be enhanced" to be in line with the current work of the Commission.

- In regards to the training of teachers, several participants suggested to add a European dimension by supporting their mobility to share good practices, as well as giving them a position of mentors for students.
- It was proposed to rephrase "efficient broadband with good connectivity" to "efficient broadband connectivity".

Regarding the cluster on European youth issues:

- In the objective, the role of youth organisations with EU institutions and national governments should be reinforced.
- The introduction of a "Youth test" as part of the impact assessment exercise prior to the presentation of legislative proposals was supported by members of the Working Group.
- Regarding youth involvement in politics, some participants noted doubts on the reduction of minimum voting age, while other members commented in favour, focusing on younger people's criminal liability and taxation, and welcoming the light touch way in which the wording of the proposal is phrased.
- Under the subject of observatory visits, it was suggested to remove the reference to subsidies, seen as unclear by participants, and add becoming an entrepreneur as an option for career guidance.
- On the European Youth Guarantee, it should be referred to all European government levels involved in its implementation.
- Regarding the ban of unpaid internships and compliance of internships and jobs to quality standards, several speakers described the wording "*open* labour market" as unclear and a participant proposed to rephrase it to "outside formal education".
- On reasonable living standards, several comments suggested that the comparison to older age groups was not appropriate and could create some confusion.
- Finally, under the measure on brain drain, ideas included: calling for the use of innovative tailored policies and EU funding, as well as referring to underpopulated areas that are particularly subject to the issue.

On the cluster on culture and exchanges, the Chair presented the revised proposals and ideas raised by participants included the following:

- Under the subject of exchanges, a senior citizen exchange programme, as senior citizens can play a crucial role in sharing heritage, as well as the opening of Erasmus to local and regional representatives could be mentioned.
- Overall, the sentence on the promotion of English was seen as satisfactorily balanced; the reference to "neighbouring countries" should specify "EU neighbouring countries".
- In regards to the measure on multilingualism, it was requested to refer to both the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as well as using a stronger expression than "taking note". The idea of a special EU institution devoted to the protection and promotion of minority languages was also put forward.
- Regarding European cultural heritage, there were suggestions to add a mention to European culture and refer to the Sister cities programme.
- Several speakers emphasised the importance of adopting a European Status of artists.

Regarding sports, the Chair presented the new cluster. Several speakers considered that it could be expanded and suggested the following ideas:

- Under the objective, the formulation "sport is at a crossroads of many issues" could be rephrased to mention "the crucial importance of sport for European societies".
- It was suggested to not refer to "elite sports" but to "professional and commercial sports", as opposed to folksports and grassroots sports, which should all be included in the mobility programmes.
- Finally, the measure regarding the need for an enhanced showcasing of European identity should concern the display of EU symbols in general, not just of the flag.

#### **4. Concluding remarks of the Chair**

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking participants for their work and declaring that this meeting might be the last one of the Working Group. She also specified that there will not be a new version of proposals for the plenary on the following day as they could not be translated in time. However, contributions made during the meeting will be taken into account during her remarks as a chair and they will be taken to the next steps.