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Parliamentary Dimension

Background Note

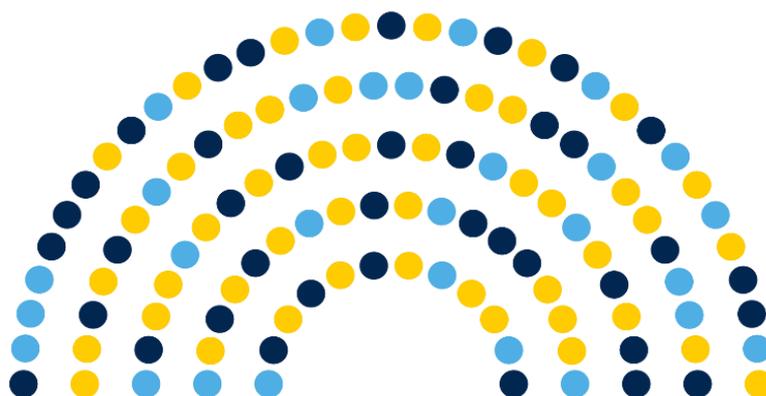
Session IV

Conference on the Future of Europe – state of play

LXV COSAC plenary meeting

31 May-1 June 2021

Lisbon



BACKGROUND NOTE

Session IV

Conference on the Future of Europe – state of play

On 10 March 2021, the [leaders of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament \(EP\) signed the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), allowing the start of the work of this Conference, announced in the framework of [European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's political guidelines](#), as a project to give European citizens more say on what the European Union does and how it works for them.

The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) aims to give European citizens a greater role in shaping the European Union's (EU) future policies and ambitions by holding several events and debates across the EU, allowing people to have a say through a multilingual digital platform. Under the authority of the three institutions, represented by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the EU Council and the President of the European Commission, acting as its joint presidency, the Conference has two main structures: the **Executive Board**, composed of an equal representation of the three institutions, which is responsible for taking decisions by consensus, regarding the works of the Conference, its processes and events, overseeing the Conference as it progresses, and preparing the meetings of the Conference Plenary, including citizens' input and their follow up; and the **Plenary**, which will ensure that the recommendations from the national and European citizens' panels, grouped by themes, are debated without a predetermined outcome and without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy areas.

As regards the themes, and according to the Joint Declaration, these will focus mainly on: building a healthy continent, the fight against climate change and environmental challenges, an economy that works for people, social fairness, equality and intergenerational solidarity, Europe's digital transformation, European rights and values including the rule of law, migration challenges, security, the EU's role in the world, the Union's democratic foundations, and how to strengthen democratic processes governing the European Union.

Under the Joint Declaration, the presidential Troika of COSAC (currently Portugal, Germany and Slovenia) is a permanent observer member of the Conference Executive Board. The participation and involvement of national Parliaments have been extensively discussed since the launch of this idea in July 2019. The Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and social partners (Business Europe and the European Trade Union Confederation) also participate in the Conference as observers.

The [Executive Board held its constitutive meeting on 24 March](#), and several meetings were held, where issues such as the [multilingual digital platform](#), the Charter of principles for citizens' participation, the Conference's visual identity, the Executive Board's working methods and rules of procedure, the programme for the inaugural event on 9 May, Europe Day, as well as the Rules of Procedure of the Conference as regards Citizens' Panels were discussed.

The [multilingual digital platform](#) was [launched](#) on 19 April. It will be the hub for the actions developed in the framework of the Conference, which will gather all contributions from citizens, whether shared online or at events, around ten topics: climate change and the environment; health; a stronger economy, social justice and jobs; digital transformation; values and rights, the rule of law, security; migration; education, culture, youth and sport; the EU in the world; European democracy; and other ideas. Platform users will have to abide by the Conference [Charter](#), aiming to *contribute to the debate and deliberations on the priorities for our common future, together with citizens from all backgrounds, walks of life and all corners of the European Union.*

The Conference will organise Citizens' Panels, which are expected to take place in the autumn, each of which consists of 200 citizens chosen randomly, based on the principle of proportionality and representativity in terms of geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and level of education, with each panel being composed of at least one-third of young people between 16 and 25. Focusing on specific topics, representatives of each panel will be invited to present their contributions at the meetings of the Conference Plenary.

The Conference Plenary will be composed of 433 representatives, of which 108 are members of the European Parliament, 108 are members of national parliaments of EU Member States, 54 are members of the European Council, and 3 are members of the European Commission. In addition, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and

Social Committee will each have 18 representatives, social partners and civil society will each have 8 representatives, and there will be 80 representatives from Citizens' Panels, as well as 27 representatives, one per Member State, of national Citizens' Panels or national events and 1 representative of the European Youth Parliament/European Youth Forum.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that, based on the proposals adopted by the Conference Plenary, acting by consensus of the representatives of the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission and the members of national Parliaments, the Executive Board will draw up a report to be published.

Questions:

- What is the aim of the Conference on the Future of Europe?
- What is the role of Parliaments in the Conference on the Future of Europe?
- Which follow-up for the Conference in the post-April 2022?

