



36th

Bi-annual Report

**Developments in
European Union
Procedures and Practices
Relevant to
Parliamentary Scrutiny**

Prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and presented to:

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for Union Affairs of Parliaments
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Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union

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BACKGROUND

This is the Thirty-sixth Bi-annual Report from the COSAC Secretariat.

COSAC Bi-annual Reports

The XXX COSAC decided that the COSAC Secretariat should produce factual Bi-annual Reports, to be published ahead of each ordinary meeting of the Conference. The purpose of the Reports is to give an overview of the developments in procedures and practices in the European Union that are relevant to parliamentary scrutiny.

All the Bi-annual Reports are available on the IPEX website by navigating to the respective meeting.

The three chapters of this Bi-annual Report are based on information provided by the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States and the European Parliament. The deadline for submitting replies to the questionnaire for the 36th Bi-annual Report was 21 September 2021.

The outline of this Report was adopted by the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, held on 19 July 2021 in Ljubljana, via videoconference.

As a rule, the Report does not refer to all Parliaments or Chambers that have responded to a given question. Instead, illustrative examples are used.

Note that, in some cases, respondents can provide more than one answer to multiple choice questions. Any perceived disparity in the total number of answers to a question and the total number of respondents can thus be accounted.

Complete replies, received from 36 out of 39 national Parliaments/Chambers of 27 Member States and the European Parliament, can be found in the Annex on the COSAC webpage.

Note on Numbers

Of the 27 Member States of the European Union, 15 have a unicameral Parliament and 12 have a bicameral Parliament. Due to this combination of unicameral and bicameral systems, there are 39 national parliamentary Chambers in the 27 Member States of the European Union.

Although they have bicameral systems, the national Parliaments of Austria, Ireland and Spain each submit a single set of replies to the questionnaire, therefore the maximum number of respondents per question is 37, including the European Parliament. There were 36 responses to the questionnaire.

ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 1: DIGITALISATION OF PARLIAMENTS/CHAMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

The first chapter of the 36th Bi-annual Report of COSAC seeks to analyse the digital transition undertaken by national Parliaments/Chambers.

According to the report, all but one Parliament/Chamber had recently undergone digitalisation, with the main reasons being long-term strategies and short-term measures, in that order.

Most of this digitalisation concerned the organisation of official visits, conferences, and other events remotely, remote employee work and the organisation of committee meetings, while the biggest challenge facing Parliaments/Chambers in digitalising their work was the lack of adequate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment for remote work.

There was a consensus that the COVID-19 pandemic had had an impact on the accelerated digitalisation of the respective Parliaments/Chambers.

Holding committee meetings or plenary sessions remotely, organising work and providing equipment for remote working, and training employees to use information and communication technologies for remote work were the three most identified additional measures taken by Parliaments/Chambers during the pandemic to introduce workflow digitalisation. The vast majority of respondents believed their Parliaments/Chambers would retain some of the newly-adopted measures even after the pandemic. This was especially true with regard to the remote attendance and organisation of international meetings, conferences, and other events.

The majority of Parliaments/Chambers noted that their country's legal framework limited the extent to which their work could be digitalised, and the vast majority had to adopt new laws, specific law reforms, amendments to the rules of procedure or other documents to introduce digitalisation to their work.

Most respondents stated that the introduction and implementation of the measures on MP remote participation and remote voting was conditional on other circumstances.

The majority of Parliaments/Chambers noted that digitalisation had facilitated communication and cooperation between parliamentarians and different stakeholders, most notably with other national Parliaments/Chambers and EU institutions.

Almost all respondents replied positively when asked whether they had introduced digital solutions for communication and engaging with citizens, with most identifying recorded and streamed parliamentary sessions, both online and on public television.

Similarly, most Parliaments/Chambers had introduced the possibility for remote international meetings and remote cooperation, and for most this also translated into an increase in the number of such meetings.

Less than half of the respondents thought that digital participation in COSAC meetings should remain a possibility only for informal meetings, while a few thought this should be open for all COSAC meetings or possible only under exceptional circumstances.

CHAPTER 2: THE FUTURE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND BEYOND

The second chapter of the 36th Bi-annual Report of COSAC sheds light on how national Parliaments/Chambers co-shape youth policy, as this policy is largely the responsibility of the Member States, and whether and how they monitor the rollout of measures in this area.

All the Parliaments/Chambers confirmed that child and youth protection was regulated by legal acts in their respective countries. The majority of Parliaments/Chambers had also presented the relevant acts on this matter, the governmental bodies/departments responsible for youth policy and the type of documents which determined the youth policy.

When asked about the age range defining youth under the Member States' legislation, the answers were diverse and with no specific definition at the EU level.

The vast majority of the Parliaments/Chambers also specified the committees responsible for youth issues, adding that they did not have a political party that exclusively represents the interests of youth. The majority of Parliaments/Chambers were involved in monitoring the implementation of laws and other acts in the field of youth policies.

Less than half of the Parliaments/Chambers had discussed the EU Youth Strategy and only a few of them issued a position/opinion on it.

When ranking the importance of the areas related to the COVID-19 pandemic to tackle the challenges that young people face today, the majority of the respondents ranked "quality of education" as very important, along with "mental health" and "employment and entering the labour market".

With regard to voting age, almost half of the responding Parliaments/Chambers had considered an initiative or passed a law to lower the voting age; the proposed voting age for the majority of those who replied positively was 16 years.

To raise awareness among young people and inform them about their role and work, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers organised projects in cooperation with educational institutions and youth organisations, produced promotional material and had social media presence. The Parliaments/Chambers also replied that they encouraged greater political involvement of young people through, among others, "youth parliament" programs and by providing opportunities for young people to gain work experience, mainly with internships.

CHAPTER 3: CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE (CoFE)

The third chapter of the 36th Bi-annual Report of COSAC seeks to examine the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE).

Asked about the composition of their respective delegation to the CoFE, most respondents, but less than half of the responding Parliaments/Chambers, answered that the parliamentary majority and the opposition were equally represented.

When asked whether the selection process of the members of the delegation was entrusted to the Committee on European Affairs in their Parliament/Chamber, the majority of the respondents answered in the negative.

More than a half of the responding Parliaments/Chambers reported that their delegation to the CoFE was selected from among all members of Parliament, and not only from members of the Committee on European Affairs.

The vast majority of respondents reported that the delegation of their respective Parliaments/Chambers did not have a formally appointed head.

The majority of Parliaments/Chambers had no opinion on the provision stating that the plenary representatives' term in office was permanent and non-transferable, with less than a half of respondents expressing their disagreement with it.

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that there was a sufficient number of meetings related to CoFE.

A large majority of respondents also stated that the format and frequency of meetings was appropriate.

More than a half of Parliaments/Chambers indicated that the position of the CoFE plenary should be discussed and approved by the delegation to the CoFE.

The role of national parliaments in the EU decision-making, the rule of law, migration policy, climate change and environment were identified as the main topics on which a particularly strong united position from national Parliaments/Chambers could be taken.

The vast majority of respondents held or would hold events as part of the activities relating to the CoFE.

The majority of respondents identified “youth representatives” as the possible main guests or speakers at the events, with “climate change and environment” and “a stronger economy, social justice, and employment” being the most frequently chosen topics from the list of those available for discussion.

Three quarters of respondents reported that citizens would be able to follow the event via video link, while more than a half of respondents specified that citizens physically attending would be able to participate in the discussion.

CHAPTER 1

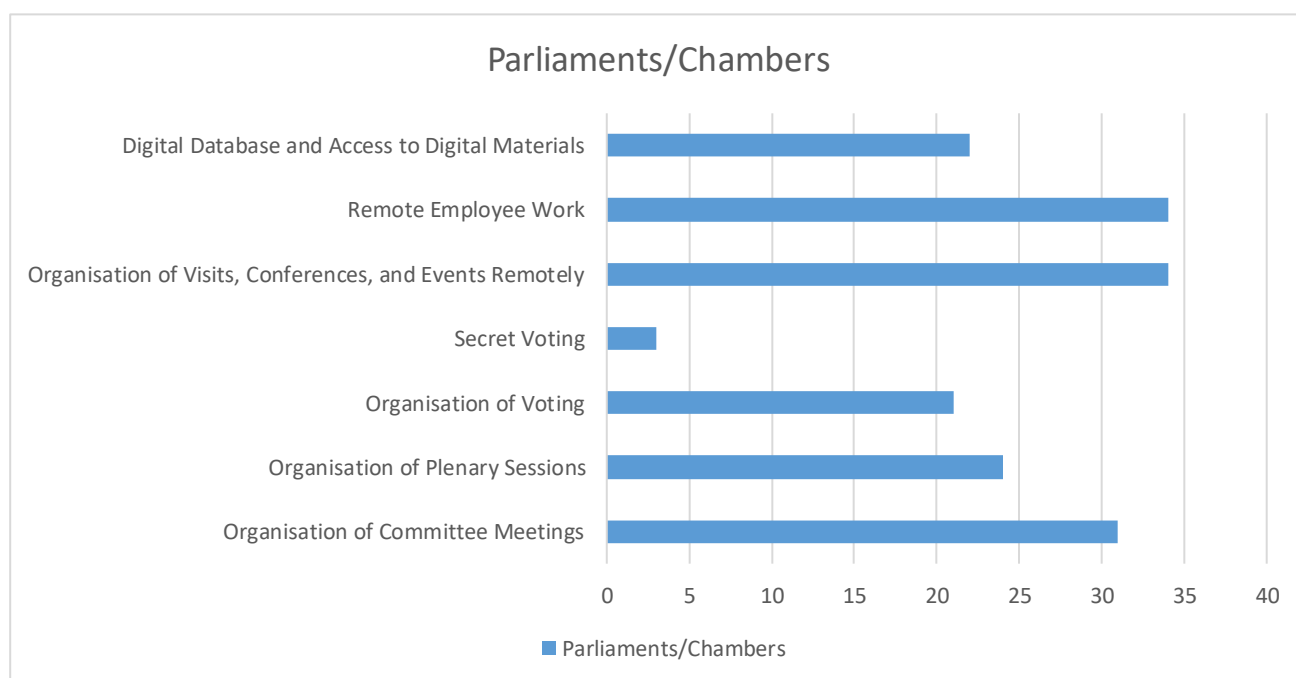
DIGITALISATION OF PARLIAMENTS/CHAMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE 36th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to analyse the measures taken by national Parliaments/Chambers as part of their digital transition.

1.1 All but one Parliament/Chamber (35 out of 36 respondents) had recently undergone digitalisation.

1.2 The main reasons behind the digitalisation identified by Parliaments/Chambers were long-term strategies for the digitalisation of public administration, with short-term measures following closely behind (17 and 14 respondents, respectively). One respondent identified medium-term guidelines, and a couple pointed to other reasons: the Polish *Sejm* noted that while this was a long-term strategy, it had been adjusted in response to the needs arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas the German *Bundestag* stated that while this was a result of short-term measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, further preparations for long-term strategies were in the pipeline. The Slovenian *Državni zbor* reported that, in their case, the main reason behind digitalisation was a combination of long-term strategies, medium-term guidelines and short-term measures.

1.3 Asked which elements of their Parliament/Chamber's work had been digitalised, most respondents pointed to the organisation of official visits, conferences, and other events remotely, and remote employee work (34 Parliaments/Chambers in each case), followed by the organisation of committee meetings (31 Parliaments/Chambers). Twenty-four Parliaments/Chambers identified the organisation of plenary sessions, followed by the introduction of a digital database and access to digital materials for employees and organisation of voting (22 and 21 respondents, respectively). Only three Parliaments/Chambers had digitalised secret voting.



A few respondents also identified other areas. The Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* referred to the launch of Parliament TV and online streaming of debates, including plenary and committee meetings, as well as the ability of citizens to submit petitions directly online.

The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* mentioned the organisation of a remote quorum for the plenary, while the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* referred to the establishment of an electronic mechanism for the exchange of information between the institution and citizens, as well as other institutions and the business sector.

The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* clarified that although elements of digitalisation had been introduced in committee and plenary meetings, these were not fully digitalised, nor were they conducted remotely at present.

1.4 From the choices offered, the biggest challenge and/or limitation facing Parliaments/Chambers in digitalising their work was the lack of adequate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment for remote work, identified by 13 Parliaments/Chambers, followed by the lack of uniform guidelines for operating remotely, chosen by 10 Parliaments/Chambers, and insufficient HR ICT implementation support and knowledge on how to use ICT efficiently, which was selected by eight Parliaments/Chambers.

Most respondents (16 Parliaments/Chambers) however identified other challenges.

The Finnish *Eduskunta* mentioned security issues and the lack of software, not dependent on multinational companies, whereas the Estonian *Riigikogu* referred to an insufficient budget.

The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* lamented the lack of a remote working culture, while the Slovenian *Državni zbor* pointed to the bureaucratic and legislative limitations for organising work remotely.

The biggest challenge for the Polish *Senat* was combining the digital system of holding committee meetings/plenary sessions remotely together with a remote electronic voting system.

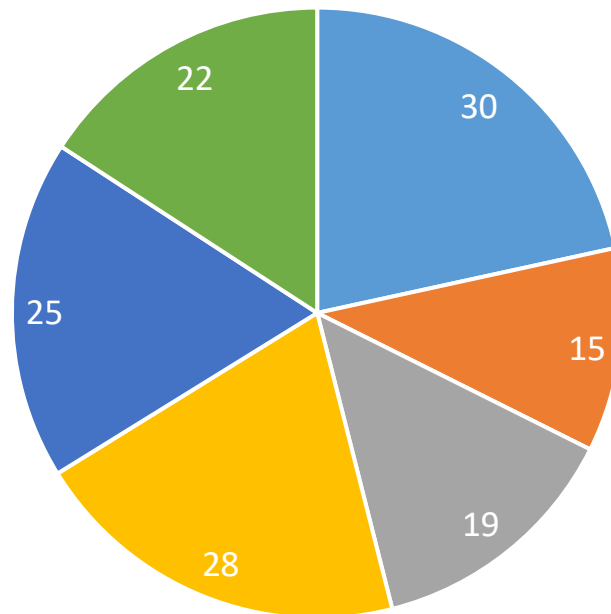
The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* mentioned its partly inadequate ICT architecture which it described as an obstacle for a “seamless device- and location-independent secure workplace”. The Irish *Houses of Oireachtas* referred to serious staffing shortages within ICT, which made it very difficult to resource the projects needed to deliver the changes required to digitalise the work.

A small number of Parliaments/Chambers (six respondents) reported no challenges.

1.5 Asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic had had an impact on the accelerated digitalisation of their Parliament/Chamber, all 36 respondents answered in the affirmative.

1.6 Asked in a follow-up question on any additional measures taken during the pandemic to introduce workflow digitalisation, most Parliaments/Chambers identified holding committee meetings or plenary sessions remotely (30 respondents). This was closely followed by organising work and providing equipment for remote working (28 respondents) and training employees to use information and communication technologies for remote work (25 respondents), then introducing written instructions or guidelines for remote work (22 respondents), setting up employee access to a computerised information system (ICT system) and to parliamentary information services (19 respondents) and setting up a remote electronic voting system (15 respondents).

Additional Measures Taken During the Pandemic to Introduce Workflow Digitalisation



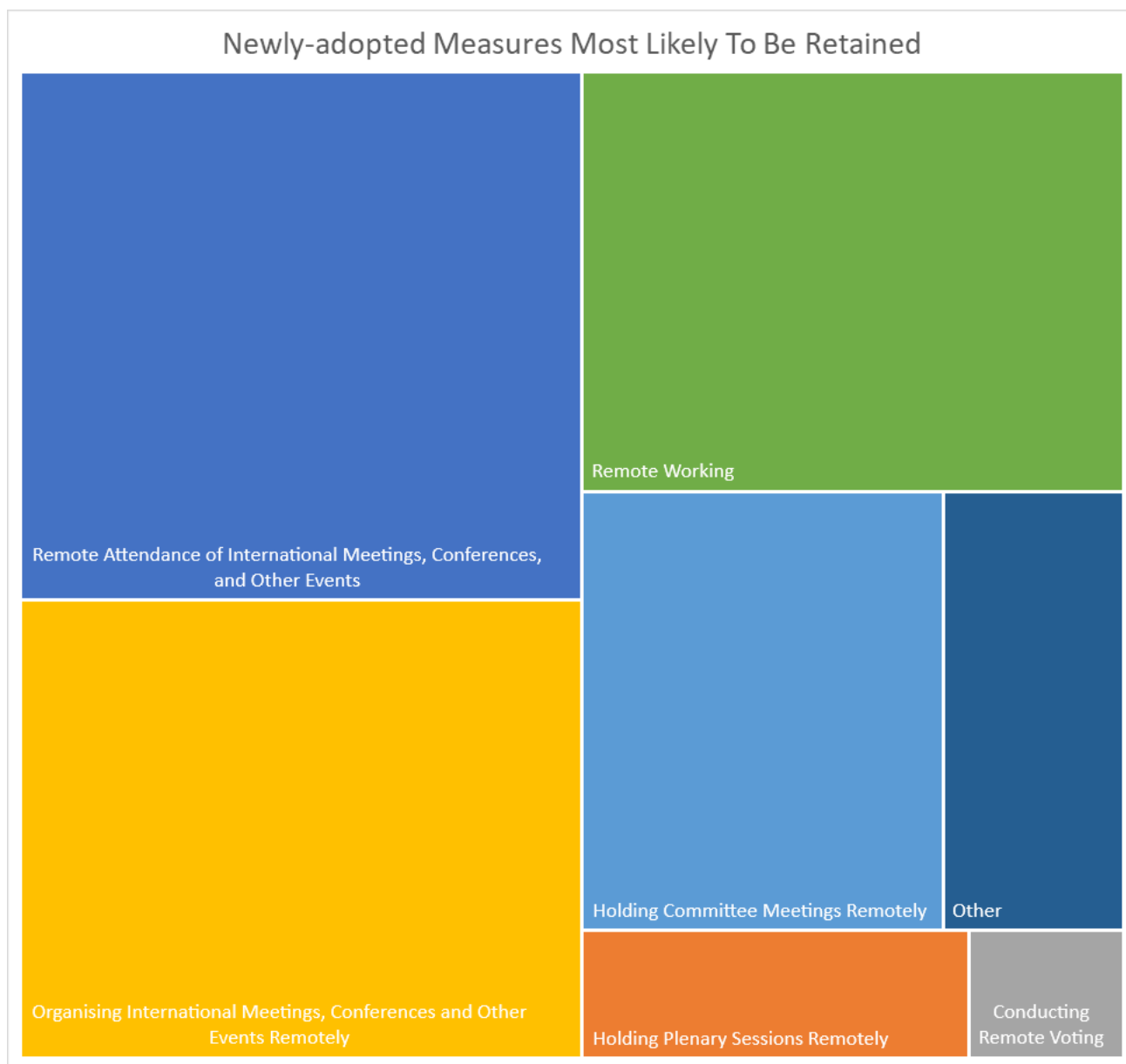
- Holding Committee Meetings or Plenary Sessions Remotely
- Setting up a Remote Voting System
- Setting up Employee Access to an ICT
- Organising and Providing for Remote Working
- ICT Training for Remote Work
- Guidelines for Remote Work

A number of respondents listed other measures. The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* referred to the acquisition of advanced IT systems to better support teleconferencing, while the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* highlighted the increase in the number of licences for access to various IT solutions. Meanwhile, the Polish *Sejm* extended its technical support hotline in order to better deal with the growing number of reported incidents. Both the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* noted the possibility of online participation in committee meetings in extraordinary cases.

1.7 The vast majority of respondents (31 out of 36) believed that their Parliaments/Chambers would retain some of the newly-adopted measures even after the pandemic. Five Parliaments/Chambers expressed no opinion. None replied negatively.

1.8 Most Parliaments/Chambers that replied in the affirmative identified the remote attendance of international meetings, conferences, and other events (30 respondents). A significant number (26 Parliaments/Chambers) also identified organising international meetings, conferences and other events remotely, and remote working (23 respondents). Holding committee meetings remotely was the fourth most chosen measure, followed by holding plenary sessions remotely and, finally, conducting remote voting (16, five and two respondents, respectively).

Some respondents identified other measures.



2.1 The majority of Parliaments/Chambers (20 respondents) noted that their country’s legal framework limited the extent to which their work could be digitalised. Eleven noted no such limitation. Four had no opinion.

Among the legal restrictions mentioned, the rules and regulations governing attendance and the lack of legal basis for holding meetings remotely stood out.

The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* noted that remote voting was not envisaged by the Parliament’s Standing Orders, except for Members who were on a governmental or parliamentary mission abroad; these could participate in voting when held by roll call or when a special majority was required. During the pandemic, these exceptions were further extended to cover pregnancy and special measures related to an epidemic or pandemic.

Similarly, the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* noted that the relevant provisions of Act no. 36 of 2012 of the National Assembly stated that Members should attend the plenary and committee meetings in person (or by way of substitution).

The Spanish *Cortes Generales* provided similar input, referring to section 70.2 of its Standing Orders, calling for speeches to be delivered in person, as one of the main legal restrictions it faced.

The Slovak *Národná rada* also referred to restrictions set by its own Rules of Procedure, which did not contain any provisions regarding online participation.

The Estonian *Riigikogu* noted that, before spring of 2020 and the necessary changes made to the Rules of Procedure and the Internal Rules Act, teleworking at plenary sessions had not been possible.

The Rules of Procedure of the Slovenian *Državni zbor* also lacked provisions on holding committee or plenary meetings remotely, and these two were thus amended to provide this possibility along with remote voting on urgent matters. Voting remotely was only possible in cases of public voting procedures.

The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* also experienced limitations related to the Rules of Procedure, but mainly with regard to a requirement for handwritten signatures at several key procedural steps, as well as other restrictions relating to the electronic processing of classified information.

Similarly, the Belgian *Chambre des représentants* experienced limitations with regard to cloud-based services in the context of GDPR and related legislative measures, while the Swedish *Riksdag* also noted that the GDPR had made the use of digital meeting services difficult, and its own rules stated that parliamentary sessions were to be held in Stockholm.

The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* stated that the plenary could not convene remotely. Nevertheless, several remote meetings to discuss urgent matters related to the pandemic were held during this time.

The Finnish *Eduskunta* changed its Rules of Procedure to accommodate the possibility of holding meetings remotely following a decision of the plenary by a 2/3 majority, based on a proposal from the Speaker's Council and a committee report from the Constitutional Law Committee.

The Irish *Houses of Oireachtas* noted that the Constitution did not allow remote participation and did not allow for the possibility of remote voting either. Physical presence was also required for voting in the Danish *Folketing*. On the other hand, the Latvian *Saeima* noted that no changes to the Constitution were made in order to be able to hold parliamentary sittings remotely, and that the procedure for remote sittings of the *Saeima* was determined by the Presidium of the *Saeima* in May 2020.

2.2 The vast majority of respondents (28 out of 35 Parliaments/Chambers) had to adopt new laws, specific law reforms, amendments to the rule of procedure, or other documents to introduce digitalisation to their work. Seven Parliaments/Chambers did not need to take similar steps.

Among the laws that needed to be modified, amendments to the Standing Orders, Rules of Procedure or internal regulations featured heavily (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, Belgian *Sénat*, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Estonian *Riigikogu*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, French *Assemblée nationale*, German *Bundestag*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Polish *Sejm*, Polish *Senat*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Romanian *Senat*, Slovak *Národná rada*, Slovenian *Državni svet*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*, Swedish *Riksdag*, European Parliament).

The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* also noted that a new legislation regarding remote working in the public sector had been passed.

The Slovak *Národná rada* added that it had approved an amendment of the Labour Code that permitted work from home, if the nature of the job allowed it.

The Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* pointed to a decision taken by the House Business Committee that allowed Members who qualified as vulnerable persons or were required to observe a period of quarantine as established by Legal Notice 111 of 2020 to participate online in committee meetings.

The Czech *Senát* adopted a resolution allowing for exceptional online attendance and voting at a committee meeting, while the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* referred to guidelines on remote committee meetings.

The Portuguese *Assembleia da República* adopted a contingency plan providing measures such as remote working and meetings with remote participation. Furthermore, a parliamentary resolution established exceptional procedures for the participation of Members of Parliament in plenary sessions.

The Irish *Houses of Oireachtas* explored the possibility for Members to participate in committee meetings in a hybrid format, while adhering to the strict rule of actually being physically present on the parliament campus.

In stark contrast, the Latvian *Saeima*, noted that no changes were made to the constitution or the Rules of Procedure of the *Saeima*, and the procedure for remote sittings was determined in May 2020 by the Presidium of the *Saeima*.

2.3 For most responding Parliaments/Chambers, the introduction and implementation of the measures on remote participation and remote voting by Members of Parliament was conditional on other circumstances (15 out of 34 respondents). Twelve respondents noted that this was only an emergency measure, with six stating that this was not implemented. Only one respondent replied that the introduction and implementation of such measures was permanent.

3.1 When asked whether digitalisation had made it easier for Members of Parliament to communicate and cooperate with different stakeholders, 24 out of 34 Parliaments/Chambers responded positively, two responded negatively and eight had no opinion.

The German *Bundestag*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* and Swedish *Riksdag* noted that digital means make it easier to schedule and conduct meetings with other stakeholders, with the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* pointing out a significant increase in the number of bilateral meetings conducted by friendship groups and committee chairs. While the Swedish *Riksdag* acknowledged possible future improvements in digital interparliamentary cooperation, all three agreed that remote participation, especially in multilateral settings, could not adequately substitute physical meetings.

3.2 Invited to specify the stakeholders with whom digitalisation made it easier to communicate and cooperate, and given the option to select multiple choices, the vast majority replied with other national Parliaments/Chambers (21 out of 23), closely followed by EU institutions (20 out of 23). Eighteen respondents selected interested parties and experts, while one less respondent (17 out of 23) chose other international organisations and 13 chose non-governmental organisations.

The Portuguese *Assembleia da República* further highlighted that it conducted videoconference meetings between members of their European Affairs Committee and the Portuguese Members of the European Parliament, as well as with several European commissioners.

3.3 Almost all respondents (34 out of 36) replied positively when asked whether they had introduced digital solutions for communicating and engaging with citizens, while the Danish *Folketing* replied negatively and the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* had no opinion.

While answering positively to the question, the Belgian *Chambre des représentants* further elaborated that the streaming of committee meetings and plenary sessions was not a result of the COVID-19 situation.

3.4 When asked which digital solutions Parliaments/Chambers had introduced for communicating and engaging with citizens, 34 out of 36 respondents provided replies selecting one or more of the provided answers. Most Parliaments/Chambers (28 out of 34) recorded and streamed all parliamentary sessions via online networks, while half of them (17 out of 34) recorded and broadcasted all their parliamentary sessions on public television. The majority of respondents (20 out of 34) also used e-mail communication for communicating and engaging with citizens and only the Estonian *Riigikogu* introduced a digital certificate for accessing electronic services for its citizens.

A number of Parliaments/Chambers mentioned additional digital solutions for communicating and engaging with citizens. Three Parliaments/Chambers provided streaming of public committee meetings (Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Lithuanian *Seimas*), with the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* and Czech *Senát* also streaming online conferences and/or seminars. Two respondents offered digital training courses, either for students (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), or for teachers and librarians (Swedish *Riksdag*) and the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* published all non-confidential working documents on their website.

Several Parliaments/Chambers introduced the possibility for citizens to submit suggestions (Polish *Sejm*), opinions (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), or online petitions (Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, French *Assemblée nationale*, French *Sénat*, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*). The Portuguese *Assembleia da República* had furthermore established an online platform for citizens to collect signatures on petitions and legislative and referendum initiatives, while the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* extended the time period for citizens and other stakeholders to comment on legislative proposals via their website. As part of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Spanish *Cortes Generales* created a specific inbox to receive citizens' opinions on the future of Europe and the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* had established a hotline for citizens.

The Slovenian *Državni zbor* highlighted the renovation of its website to ensure better user-friendliness.

3.5 A significant majority of Parliaments/Chambers (31 out of 35) recently introduced the possibility of remote international meetings and remote cooperation, while four had not.

3.6 Asked to assess whether the number of international meetings had changed with digitalisation, 16 out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers replied that the number of meetings had increased; seven respondents said the number of meetings had decreased, and six Parliaments/Chambers said the number of meetings had stayed the same. Eight Parliaments/Chambers expressed no opinion.

3.7 Opinions were divided on the continued possibility of digital participation in COSAC meetings. Less than half of the respondents (16 out of 36) said this should remain a possibility only for informal meetings of COSAC, while six were of the opinion that such possibility should be offered for all COSAC meetings. An equal number of respondents were of the opinion digital participation should only be possible under exceptional circumstances and eight respondents had no opinion.

The Finish *Eduskunta* further elaborated that the format of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC could justify digital participation in the future, while adding that the Plenary Meeting of COSAC should still be held in a physical format.

3.8 As a final remark, Portuguese *Assembleia da República* stressed that the digitalisation process had already been underway before the pandemic and emphasized the set-up of two working groups to look at how digitalisation could strengthen the relationship between the citizens and the parliament and improve the legislative process.

The Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor* noted the role digitalisation might play for the organisation of work during the renovation of the building of the Croatian Parliament following the substantial damages it suffered as a result of the two earthquakes that shook the capital in 2020.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUTURE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION- MAKING PROCESSES AND BEYOND

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE 36th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to analyse how national Parliaments/Chambers co-shape youth policy, establishing whether they monitor the rollout of measures in this area and how. The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* did not reply to a number of questions in this chapter because youth policy no longer falls within the remit of the Federal Parliament due to Belgium's constitutional landscape.

1.1 When asked if child and youth protection was regulated by legal acts in their respective country, 34 out of 35 respondents replied in the affirmative. The European Parliament highlighted that there was no specific EU legislation, because this matter fell under the competence of EU Member States.

The 34 respondents presented the legal acts shaping the child and youth protection policies in their respective Member States, referring to constitutional norms, several different laws, conventions, Child Protection Acts or similar acts and codes (e.g. the Civil Code). A number of Parliaments/Chambers also referred to the specific laws from federal provinces/communities and autonomous communities (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Belgian *Sénat*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*). Eight highlighted international and European legislation as one of the sources of legislation underpinning child and youth protection, namely the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and specific EU Directives.

1.2 With regard to the governmental bodies/departments responsible for youth policy, the majority of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (28 out of 33) mentioned a ministry in charge of this area, with portfolios varying between education, youth, sport, social affairs, labour and employment, culture, equality or integration. Some respondents referred to specific observatories, commissioners, national councils and advisory councils, ombudsmen, authorities, institutes and equivalent bodies in charge of youth policies in Member States. Eight out of the 33 respondents noted that this was a decentralised policy and referred to the regional, provincial, municipal/local authorities responsible for youth policies (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Belgian *Sénat*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*).

1.3 When asked which types of documents determined youth policy, 27 out of the 33 Parliaments/Chambers signalled legal acts. Twenty-three respondents mentioned action plans and the same number of respondents selected national strategies. National programmes were identified by 18 Parliaments/Chambers. Other specific types of documents were mentioned by some Parliaments/Chambers. The Italian *Camera dei deputati* referred to regional regulations and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* referred to the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 and the UN's Youth 2030 Strategy. The Latvian *Saeima* alluded to the youth policy guidelines and the guidelines for the development of education, while the Lithuanian *Seimas* pointed out that future national progress measures were planned under the development programmes of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Spanish *Cortes Generales* highlighted the youth plans created by the Institute of Youth, INJUVE, and the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* mentioned the youth-centred support packages put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4 With regard to the age range for youth, as defined by Member State legislation, four respondents out of 33 (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Polish *Sejm* and Slovak *Národná rada*) reported that the cohort fell between 15 and 30 years, while two respondents (Latvian *Saeima* and Swedish *Riksdag*) stated that this age range fell between 13 and 25 years, whereas two more (Hungarian *Országgyűlés* and Polish *Senat*) replied that it fell between 15 and 24.

For the remaining 24 Parliaments/Chambers, the answers were very diverse, and, in some cases, different age ranges applied for different purposes (Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Czech *Senát*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, French *Sénat*, German *Bundestag*, German *Bundesrat*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*). In other cases, legal definitions set by the federal provinces established the age range (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*) or were decided upon independently by the different communities (Belgian *Sénat*).

Some of the respondents noted that there was no general law or legal definition of the age range under which youth fell (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Danish *Folketing* and French *Assemblée nationale*), while others presented an alternative age range for youth to the ones presented in the questionnaire: Estonian *Riigikogu* – from 7 to 26 years; Finish *Eduskunta* – from 0 to 28 years; Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* – from 10 to 24 years; Lithuanian *Seimas* – from 14 to 29 years; Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* – from 13 to 30 years; Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* and Romanian *Senat* – from 14 to 35 years; Slovenian *Državni zbor* and Spanish *Cortes Generales* – from 15 to 29 years.

The European Parliament noted that there was no specific definition and that the commonly accepted age range at the EU level was 18–30.

2.1 Although some Parliaments/Chambers explained that all the parliamentary committees might address youth issues (Belgian *Sénat*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and French *Sénat*), the vast majority of the Parliaments/Chambers (35 out of 36 respondents) presented the competent committees in each Parliament/Chamber dealing with this issue. In general, the youth topics fell within the competence of the committees responsible for education, youth, sport, culture, social and family affairs and employment. Nevertheless, the Italian *Camera dei deputati* and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, as well as the Spanish *Cortes Generales*, all reported a specific parliamentary committee dealing with youth policies, namely the Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence (bicameral committee in the Italian Parliament) and Committee on the Right of Children and Adolescents (Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*) and the Committee on the Rights of the Family, Children and Adolescents (Spanish *Senado*).

2.2 The majority of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (22 out of 34) reported not having a special committee or subcommittee dealing exclusively with issues concerning youth. Nonetheless, 12 Parliaments/Chambers (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, French *Sénat*, German *Bundestag*, German *Bundesrat*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Polish *Sejm*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* and Spanish *Cortes Generales*) reported having one.

2.3 None of the 35 responding Parliaments/Chambers reported having a political party in the respective Parliament/Chamber that exclusively represented the interests of young people.

2.4 The majority of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (29 out of 35) was involved in monitoring the implementation of laws and other acts in the field of youth policies, with only six Parliaments/Chambers stating otherwise.

2.5 Regarding the involvement of Parliaments/Chambers in monitoring this implementation, the vast majority (27 out of 29 respondents) referred to their involvement in the discussion of reports related to the implementation of laws, other acts or programming documents, while 23 Parliaments/Chambers also organised public hearings or expert debates to this end. Other ways of involvement were pointed out by the responding Parliaments/Chambers, such as the provision of initiatives and recommendations to competent authorities (18 respondents). The Estonian *Riigikogu* specified that the new Youth Field Development Plan 2021–2035, approved by the Government in 2021, had been previously discussed in the Parliament plenary session, and the Cultural Affairs’ Committee and different political factions had been presented with the opportunity to submit proposals to the draft version of the document at an earlier stage, adding that there was also the possibility of carrying out committee meetings with different entities. The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* referred to the first ever Youth Assembly on Climate hosted by the Parliament in 2019 and to the possibility for the relevant parliamentary committee to conduct a 12-month review of newly enacted legislation. The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* noted that all the activities were related to the bicameral Committee on Childhood and Adolescence.

2.6 When asked whether their respective Parliament/Chamber had discussed the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, less than half of the respondents (15 out of 35) answered in the affirmative, 19 answered negatively and one Parliament replied that even though the Strategy had not yet been discussed, such a discussion was indeed planned.

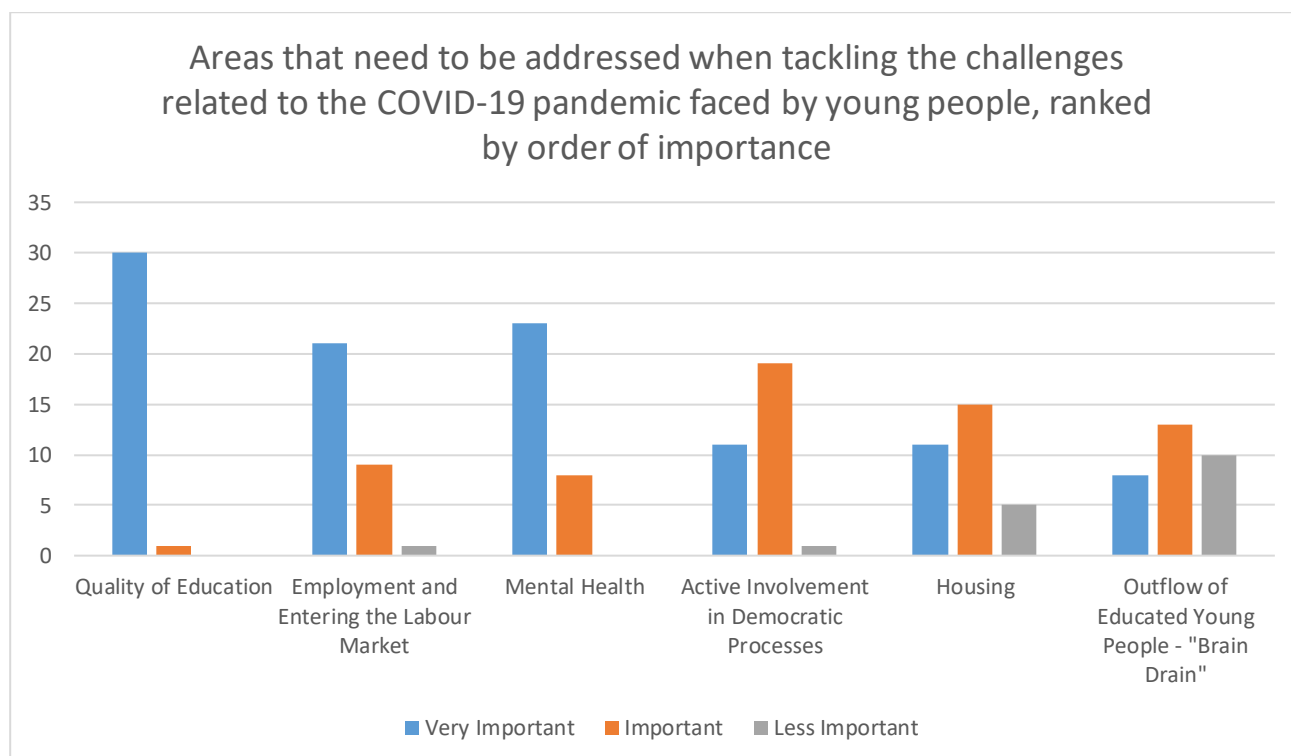
2.7 When asked whether Parliaments/Chambers had adopted a position/opinion or resolution on that same Strategy, the vast majority (27 out of the 35 respondents) replied that they had not. Two Parliaments (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* and Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*) stated that they had not yet done so, but planned to do so in the future.

Six respondents confirmed that they had adopted a position/opinion or resolution on the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 and were invited to elaborate on the main points. The Estonian *Riigikogu* welcomed the structure, main directions, planned changes and cross-sectoral cooperation of the Strategy, and recognized the importance of paying attention to youth work and of involving young people in the development of policies that affected them. The Latvian *Saeima* highlighted the crucial importance of cross-sectoral cooperation and emphasized the Latvian priorities, namely, youth employment, media literacy, recognition of informal learning and reducing social inequality.

The Lithuanian *Seimas* stated that its Committee on European Affairs had approved the position of Lithuania on the draft resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council “on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: the European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027”. Similarly, the Swedish *Riksdag* noted that its Committee on EU Affairs had discussed the EU’s Youth Strategy prior to the Council meeting in November 2018 and held a positive view of the Strategy. Among other things, it stressed the importance for young people to establish themselves in the labour market, but also underlined the fact that according to the Treaties, the EU enjoyed only supporting competence in youth policy and that the Strategy should not entail any harmonisation of the regulatory frameworks of the Member States. The Slovak *Národná rada* reported that it had considered the Strategy in June 2018.

The European Parliament referred to its implementation report on the EU Youth Strategy, which evaluated the previous Youth Strategy (2010–2018) and provided concrete policy recommendations for the 2019–2027 period.

2.8 When asked to choose among six areas related to the COVID-19 pandemic and rank them by order of importance when tackling the challenges that young people face today, 31 respondents gave their opinion, ranking them from “very important” to “less important”. Almost all respondents (30) ranked “quality of education” as very important. “Mental health” was ranked as very important by 23 respondents, “employment and entering the labour market” by 21 respondents, “active involvement in democratic processes” and “housing” by eleven respondents each; and finally “brain drain and the outflow of educated people” was ranked very important by eight respondents.



3.1 Asked if Parliaments/Chambers had considered any initiative or passed any law to lower the voting age, just over half of the respondents, 19 out of 36, responded negatively, whereas the remaining 17 respondents replied positively.

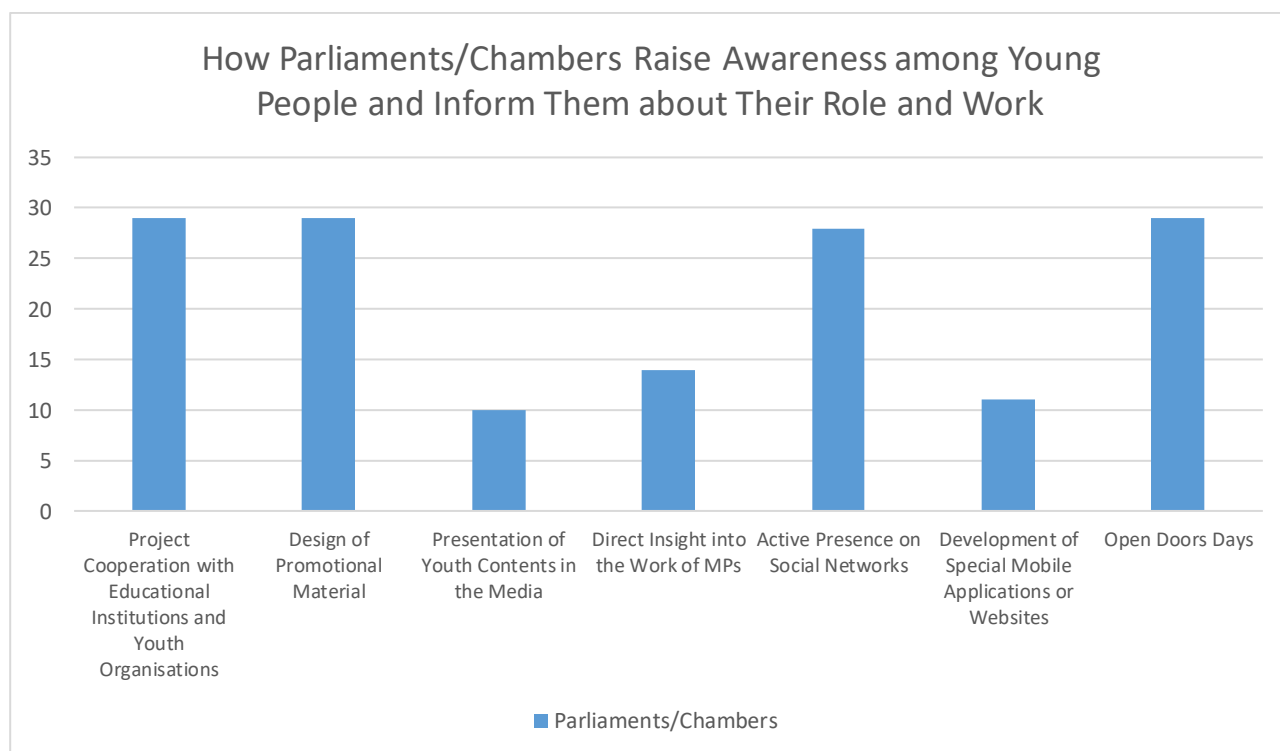
3.2 Out of the 17 respondents that confirmed that their Parliaments/Chambers had considered an initiative or passed a law to lower the voting age, one respondent (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) stated that the proposed voting age was seventeen years and 14 respondents indicated that the proposed age was sixteen (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Estonian *Riigikogu*, French *Assemblée nationale*, French *Sénat*, German *Bundestag*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Latvian *Saeima*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, and Spanish *Cortes Generales*). Two more respondents provided clarifications: the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* explained that the Government Programme contained a commitment to “explore every avenue” to ensure that a reduction would be considered in time for the 2024 elections; the Italian *Camera dei deputati* stated that a constitutional law had been approved in July of 2021 in order to reduce the

voting age for Senate elections from 25 years to 18 years; other proposals had also been made by parties to reduce the voting age to sixteen years, but these were still being discussed.

The German *Bundestag*, one of the 14 respondents that had replied positively to the question, also specified that the proposal was rejected by the Chamber in May 2021. In addition, the German *Bundesrat* indicated that the voting age for elections to regional Parliaments had been lowered in some *Länder*. The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* specified that the proposal for lowering the voting age applied to elections to the European Parliament, as stated in the 2020 Coalition Agreement and the respective legislative proposal. The Belgian *Sénat* also noted that all political groups had youth movements that were very active and made it possible for young people to actively participate in politics.

3.3 When asked how Parliaments/Chambers went about raising awareness among young people and informing them about their role and work,

- the majority (29 out of the 36 respondents) replied that they did this through project cooperation with educational institutions and youth organisations; through design of promotional material (leaflets, brochures); and through open door days;
- twenty-eight respondents indicated that they raised awareness and informed young people through active presence on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.);
- fourteen respondents replied that they offered direct insight into the work of MPs (shadowing);
- eleven respondents specified that they had developed special mobile applications or websites with customised content, and
- ten respondents indicated that they raised awareness and informed young people through presentation of youth content in the media (broadcasts, interviews).



In addition, several Parliaments/Chambers mentioned that they organised study visits for schools and students, as well as guided tours of their Parliaments/Chambers for young people (Austrian

Nationalrat and *Bundesrat*, Belgian *Sénat*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, French *Sénat*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*). Some respondents to this question wrote that they raised awareness and informed young people by organising “Youth Parliaments” (Belgian *Sénat*, Czech *Senát*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), workshops, and educational activities, as well as by disseminating relevant material (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Czech *Senát*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*). Three respondents provided details on the dedicated websites available (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, French *Sénat*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*). The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* specified that a “children’s question time” was organised with 150 primary school students on a yearly basis and, similarly, a yearly “debate-competition” was organised by the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*. The European Parliament mentioned the “Parlamentarium”, a structured dialogue with youth organisations, as well as the organisation of the dedicated European Youth Event (EYE) and the Euroscola events.

3.4 Asked how Parliaments/Chambers encouraged greater political involvement among young people, the majority (29 out of 36 respondents) replied that they organised “children/youth parliaments”. Twenty Parliaments/Chambers a simulation of the plenary session. Seventeen indicated that they encouraged involvement through the organisation of workshops, debates and roundtables with representatives of youth organisations. Finally, 12 respondents did so through the involvement of representatives of youth organisations in the various stages of the legislative process.

3.5 When asked if Parliaments/Chambers provided opportunities for young people to gain work experience, almost all but one of the 36 respondents replied yes. When invited to elaborate on these opportunities, almost all respondents (35) replied that internships were offered for undergraduate or/and graduate students, and by some Parliaments/Chambers for school students. The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* mentioned that a Work Learning Programme for young people with intellectual disabilities had been established for the first time in 2018 and was now running for the second year. The Danish *Folketing* mentioned organising a role-play event called “Politician for a Day”.

CHAPTER 3

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE (CoFE)

THE THIRD CHAPTER OF THE 36th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to examine the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE).

1.1 The Parliaments/Chambers were first asked about the composition of their delegation to the CoFE. Less than half (15 out of 33 respondents) answered that the parliamentary majority and the opposition were equally represented. Nine respondents indicated that their delegations included more members of the parliamentary majority, whereas the delegation of the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* and of the Slovenian *Državni zbor* included more members of the opposition. Five Parliaments/Chambers replied that their delegation included just the parliamentary majority. Only two Chambers' delegations, from the Czech *Senát* and the Polish *Senat*, were composed solely of the parliamentary opposition.

1.2 When asked whether the selection process of the members of the delegation was entrusted to the Committee on European Affairs in their Parliament/Chamber, the majority of the respondents (22 out of 36 respondents) answered in the negative. Fourteen Parliaments/Chambers replied positively.

1.3 More than half of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (20 out of 34 respondents) reported that their delegation to the CoFE was selected from among all members of Parliament. In 15 Parliaments/Chambers, the delegation was composed exclusively from members of the Committee on European Affairs.

1.4 When asked about their opinion on giving priority to members of Parliament who were members of the Committee on European Affairs when it came to selecting delegation members, 13 Parliaments/Chambers were in favour of giving such priority, while five were opposed. Sixteen Parliaments/Chambers had no opinion on the matter.

1.5 When it came to indicating whether the delegation of Parliaments/Chambers had a formally appointed head, the vast majority of respondents (25 out of 35) answered negatively, while 11 Parliaments/Chambers replied in the affirmative. The European Parliament stated that its delegation was headed by the Co-Chair of the Executive Board, Mr Guy VERHOFSTADT.

1.6 Thirteen Parliaments/Chambers expressed their disagreement with the provision stating that the plenary representatives' term in office was permanent and non-transferable, while seven agreed and 15 had no opinion.

Six Parliaments/Chambers stated that the composition of the delegation would need to change if the representative ceased to be a member of the respective Parliament/Chamber due to elections. The European Parliament had repeatedly stated in the Executive Board that the Plenary representatives' term in office was permanent and non-transferable, with the exception of changes due to elections.

The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* argued that the chamber had sent a letter to Troika Members outlining the importance of substitution. The *Houses of Oireachtas*' delegation was of the view that travelling and contributing to the Conference required a significant commitment from national

Parliament representatives. In light of this, it argued in favour of substitution, which should be permissible in order to recognise the multiple commitments faced by delegates.

The Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, the Lithuanian *Seimas*, the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* and the Slovenian *Državni zbor* also underlined that providing the possibility for delegation members to select a substitute for themselves would allow for full participation and ensure proper representation.

2.1 When asked whether three plenary sessions for the second half of 2021 and three plenary sessions for the first half of 2022 were enough, the majority of respondents (23 out of 33) replied that the number of meetings was sufficient. Ten Parliaments/Chambers had no opinion. The German *Bundesrat* noticed that the schedule was very tight, regardless of the appropriate number of plenary sessions. The French *Sénat* pointed out that, given the scope of the CoFE's debates and the desire to have a real dialogue with citizens, it seemed necessary to shift the deadline for its work beyond spring 2022.

2.2 Parliaments/Chambers were asked to give their opinion on the practice, implemented by the Portuguese Presidency, of having delegations of members of Parliament meeting before the plenary session to discuss its content. A large majority of 24 respondents (out of 32) stated that the format and frequency of meetings was appropriate. Seven Parliaments/Chambers found it would be more appropriate to have only the heads of delegations or one member from each delegation represent the established position of their national delegation.

Six Parliaments/Chambers estimated that such meetings should not only take place before but also after the plenary session to jointly assess and analyse the course of the discussion and achievements. Among these was the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, which was also in favour of only having the heads of delegations or one member from each delegation represent the established position of the delegation.

2.3 The Parliaments/Chambers were asked to indicate how the delegation's position to the CoFE plenary should be decided. More than half of the respondents (18 out of 30) answered that the position should be discussed and approved by the delegation to the CoFE. Of these, 11 Parliaments/Chambers indicated that this delegation should have the authority to approve the position. Sixteen Parliaments/Chambers replied that the Committee of European Affairs should discuss the position, and six of these respondents reported that the position should also be discussed by the committee responsible for the content of the proposal. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, and the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* and Romanian *Senat* noted that the position should be discussed by the Committee on European Affairs, by the committee responsible for the content of the proposal, and should be approved during a plenary session of the respective Parliament/Chamber. The Italian *Camera dei Deputati* answered that the position should be approved during a plenary session of Parliament, without preliminary discussion.

Four Parliaments/Chambers noted that the position of the delegation to the CoFE should first be in line with the government's position. The Estonian *Riigikogu* replied that the proposal of the delegation should not only be in line with the government's position, but should also be discussed in the European Affairs Committee. The Lithuanian *Seimas* stated that the proposal of the delegation should be in line with the government's position and should be discussed by the committee responsible for the content of the proposal. The Slovenian *Državni zbor* and Slovenian *Državni svet*

indicated that the proposal should be discussed and approved by the delegation to the CoFE and should be in line with the government's position.

2.4 Asked whether there was a topic on which national Parliaments/Chambers should take a particularly strong united position, 18 respondents provided different opinions, mentioning one or several topic(s) which could be the object of a strong united position. The Danish *Folketing*, the French *Sénat*, the German *Bundesrat*, the German *Bundestag*, the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, the Italian *Camera dei deputati*, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, and the Polish *Senat*, considered this topic could be the role of national parliaments in the EU decision-making process. The Italian *Camera dei deputati* specified fields, such as subsidiarity checks, pre-legislative dialogue with EU institutions, transparency within the Council and in the interinstitutional legislative negotiations. Indeed, according to the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, the subsidiarity check and the political dialogue, permitted national Parliaments to share their views on draft legislative acts in a body such as COSAC, and this in turn fostered a more democratic and transparent European legislative decision-making process.

According to the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, and the Lithuanian *Seimas*, national Parliaments/Chambers should take a particularly strong united position on migration policy. The Lithuanian *Seimas* pointed out the recent developments at the EU's external borders – especially at the border between Belarus and Lithuania, Latvia and Poland – and asked for new common solutions at the EU level.

The French *Assemblée nationale* and the Polish *Senat* mentioned the rule of law as a potential common topic. Climate change and the environment were mentioned by the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, the Polish *Senat*, the Romanian *Senat* and the Slovak *Národná rada*. The latter also proposed social polarisation and deepening of the democracy deficit as topics that could warrant a strong united position by Parliaments/Chambers.

According to the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, national Parliaments/Chambers should take a particularly strong united position on the involvement of candidate and potential candidate countries in the forming of the future of European Union. The Czech *Senát* mentioned Treaty reform, whereas the Estonian *Riigikogu* argued that the Treaties should not be renegotiated as an outcome of the CoFE.

3.1 Asked whether Parliaments/Chambers held or will hold any events as part of the activities relating to the CoFE, the vast majority of respondents (27 out of 34 respondents) answered in the affirmative.

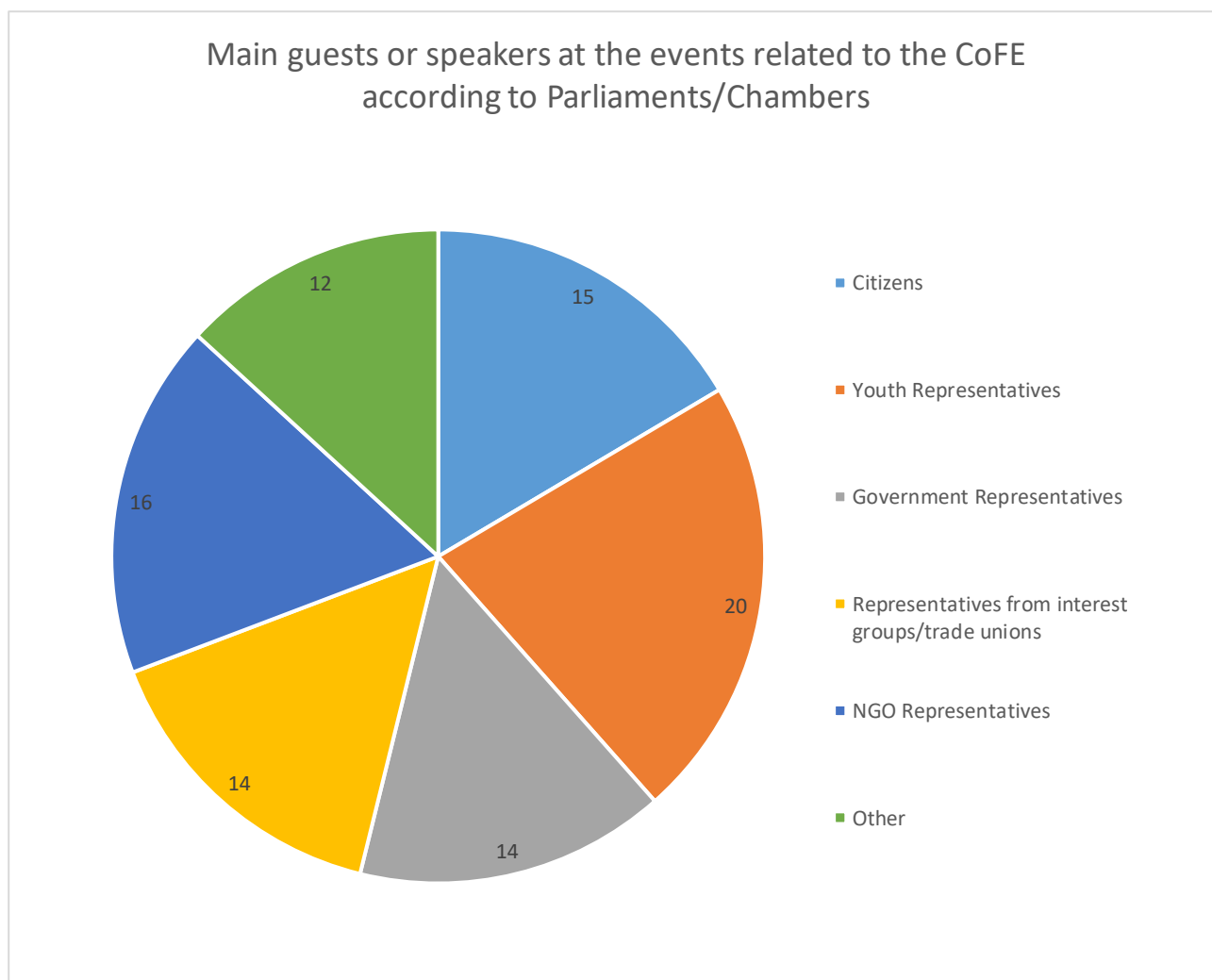
In the majority of the Parliaments/Chambers, the EU Affairs Committee held or would hold events related to the CoFE. In some Parliaments/Chambers, these events were or could be organised by the relevant standing committees (as, for example, the defense or foreign affairs committee), or co-organised by these standing committees and the EU Affairs Committee.

The Foreign Affairs Committee and the EU Policies Committee of the Italian *Camera dei deputati* and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* were jointly conducting a fact-finding survey which aimed at collecting points of view and information on the future of Europe, the results of which could be later presented at an event.

The Danish *Folketing* stated that it would hold two citizens' hearings on the future of Europe.

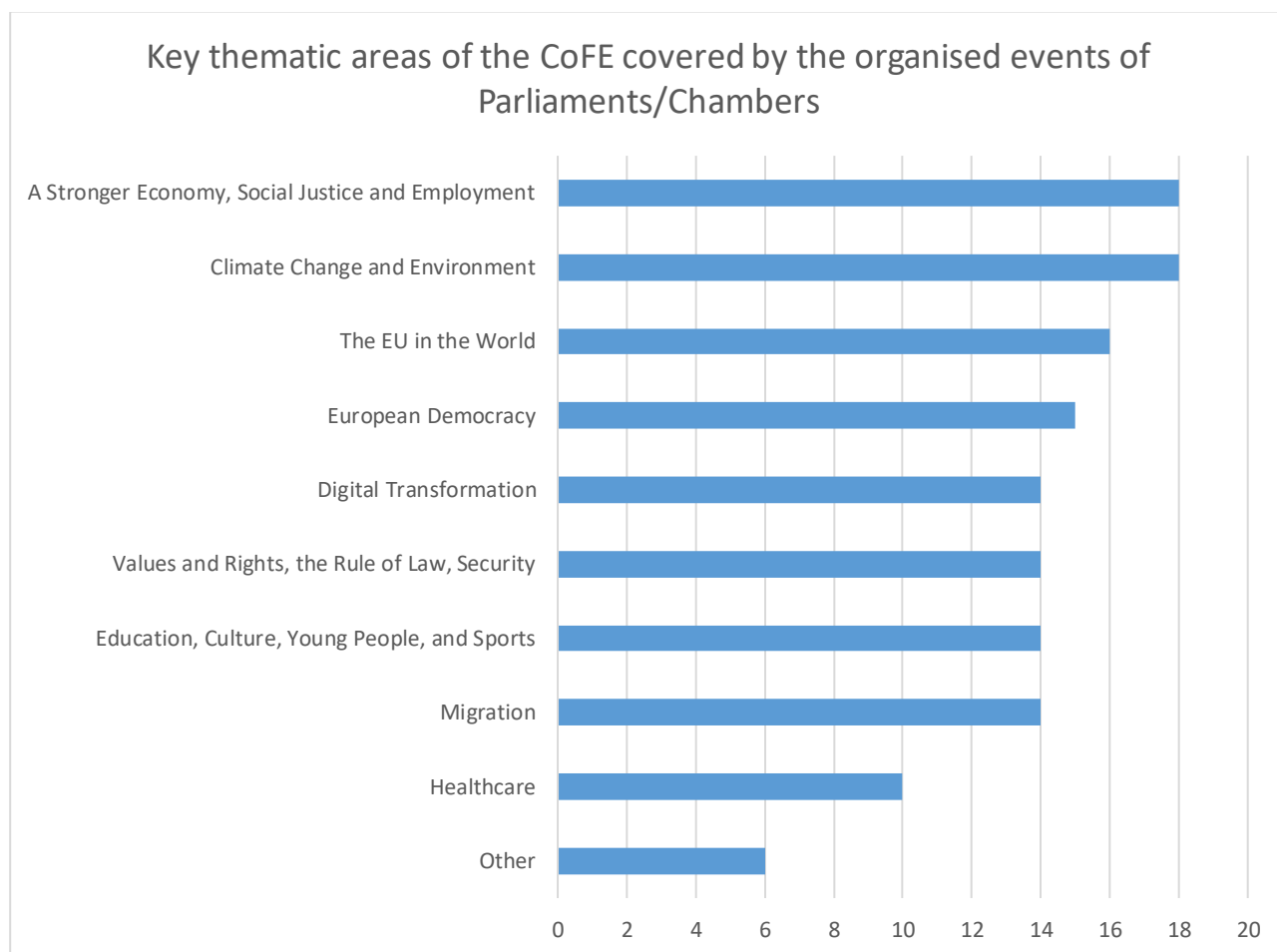
The European Parliament also organised a number of events related to the CoFE. For example, the EYE event.

3.2 Asked who the main guests or speakers were or would be at the events, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers (20 out of 27 respondents) signaled that they had or would invite “youth representatives”, And more than half (16 respondents) have planned to invite or had invited NGO representatives. Fifteen respondents said they would invite or had invited citizens, and 14 respondents stated that they had invited or planned to invite government representatives, with another 14 respondents pointing to representatives from interest groups/trade unions. Other types of speakers and guests were or will be invited at the events: for example, the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, and the French *Assemblée nationale* invited or would like to invite members of the European Parliament, European commissioners and/or national Parliamentarians. Moreover, an event with participants in the International Parliamentary Scholarship of the German *Bundestag* (mainly from the Western Balkan region) was being considered. The French *Sénat* and Italian *Camera dei deputati* have planned to invite regional and local authorities. The Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, the Polish *Sejm*, and the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* were interested in inviting scholars, academics or researchers at CoFE events.



3.3 When asked to choose amongst 9+1 key thematic areas of the CoFE which have been covered by the organised events, 18 respondents chose climate change and environment and a stronger economy, social justice, and employment, and 16 chose the EU in the world. European democracy

was chosen by 15 respondents. 14 respondents selected values and rights, the rule of law, security, digital transformation, migration and education, culture, young people, and sports, respectively. Finally, ten respondents opted for healthcare.



The French *Sénat* noted that the organised events would cover all the thematic areas of the CoFE. Some Parliaments/Chambers suggested other thematic areas, such as tourism (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) and freedom of speech (Polish *Sejm*). The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* pointed out that thematic areas would be chosen depending on the issues that would be brought up by citizens.

The Slovenian *Državni zbor* mentioned that a discussion on the topic of Youth in the Western Balkans was organised at the end of September 2021, as part of the meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the Western Balkans. The Committee on EU Affairs had also organised a round table of academics/expert on the Future of EU Governance. The Slovenian *Državni zbor* specified that two more events in the organisation of Committee on Foreign Policy and Committee on Defence, respectively, were being planned.

3.4 Asked whether they considered any of the events to be especially innovative in terms of content and organisation, 11 Parliaments/Chambers offered different opinions.

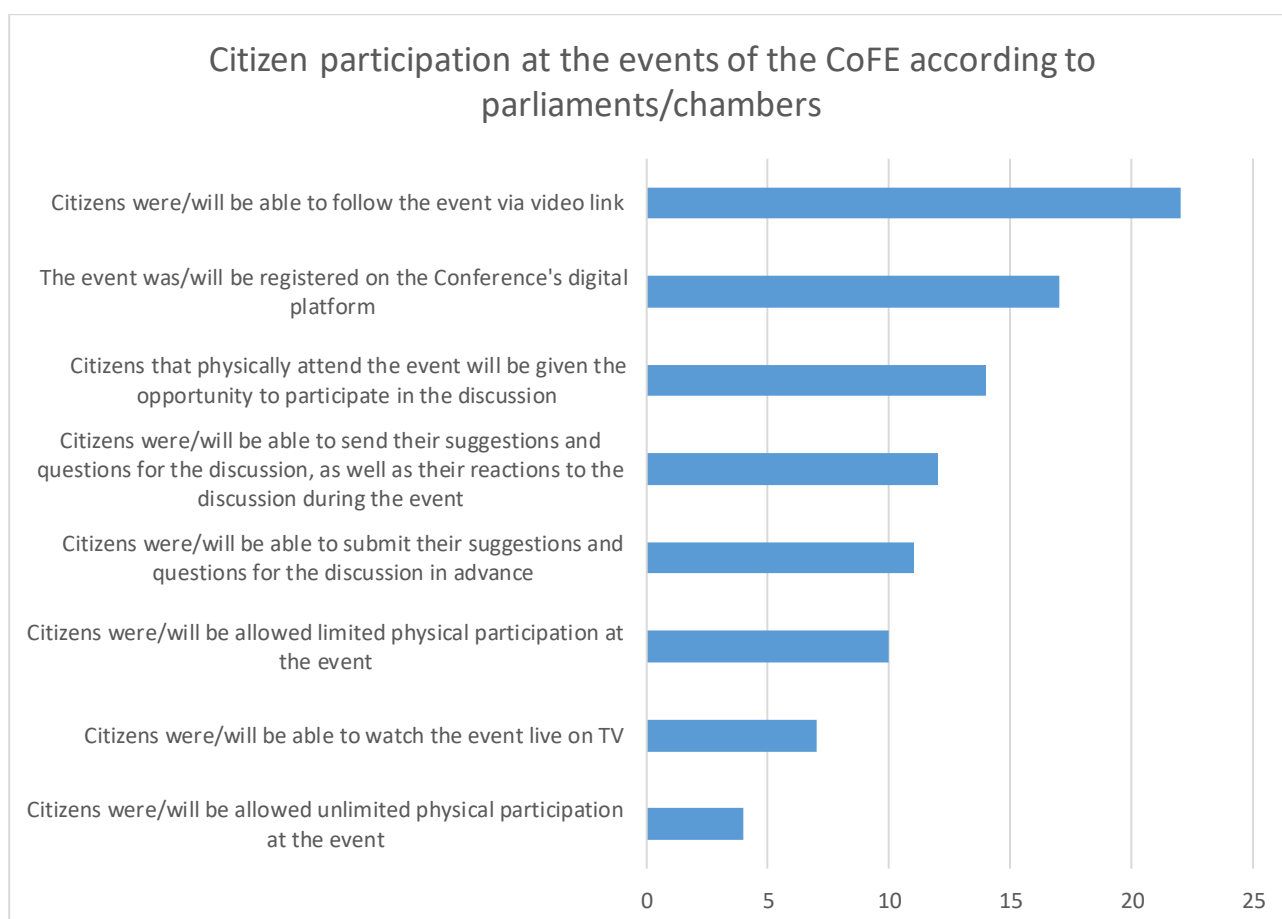
The French *Assemblée nationale* had organised a conference entitled “Europe Urgency, Europe Hope”, which had provided an opportunity to involve citizens in the debates via a dedicated platform allowing them to interact and react. The European Affairs Committee of the French *Sénat* had launched an online consultation of local elected representatives through a dedicated platform, the results of which would then serve as the basis for physical meetings.

The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* referred to the organisation of workshops to gain input from the civil society, especially from the youth.

The German *Bundesrat* made use of Instagram's live feature.

The European Parliament mentioned the initiative of EYE2021 which brings together young people from the EU and beyond to exchange views with experts, decision-makers, activists, and influencers. It features both virtual, in-person (in Strasbourg) and new hybrid-format activities and is the culmination of the European Parliament's youth consultation process for the CoFE. In May 2021, young people's ideas started being collected on youthideas.eu. These ideas will be explored in ideation workshops during EYE2021 and after a public voting, a consolidated report will be presented to the Conference and feed into its political debate.

3.5 Asked whether they planned on ensuring or how did you ensure citizen participation at the event, especially considering the pandemic, the majority of respondents (22 out of 25) replied that citizens would be able to follow the event via video link. More than a half (17 respondents) stated that the event was/would be registered on the CoFE's digital platform and 14 respondents specified that citizens that physically attend the event will be given the opportunity to participate in the discussion. Only four respondents noted that citizens were/would be allowed unlimited physical participation at the event.



The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* specified that a resolution on a public discussion on the future of Europe had been adopted. In this resolution, the government was requested to commit itself to a lively, well-informed public discussion about (the intentions of) the European Union and the contributions and

ambitions of the Netherlands in this respect, and to promote this discussion with additional financial resources and to send a detailed proposal to both Chambers.

36th

Bi-annual Report

COSAC