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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Summary report of the 8th meeting of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Delegations will find in the annex the summary report of the 8th meeting of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe and the list of participants.



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

Summary report of the eighth meeting of the Executive Board

of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Saturday 4 December 2021

11.00 - 12.00, Remote

Participants: please see the list of participants in annex

Summary and conclusions:

The Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe held its eighth meeting on 4 December 2021 in remote format. The Executive Board was called at short notice in reaction to the evolving epidemiological situation in Europe and its impact on upcoming Conference activities.

The meeting was co-chaired by Member of the European Parliament, Guy VERHOFSTADT, Slovenian State Secretary for EU Affairs, Gašper DOVŽAN, and Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka ŠUICA.

The Executive Board exchanged views on the third session of European Citizens' Panel 2 in Florence. The Executive Board endorsed the proposed decision to hold the Panel in Florence on the scheduled dates of 10-12 December, in full respect of the health measures in place, and in hybrid format.

The Executive Board also exchanged views on the third Conference Plenary session scheduled for 17-18 December in Strasbourg. The Executive Board decided to postpone this Conference Plenary meeting due to the evolving COVID-19 situation in several Member States, but to allow the Plenary Working Groups to organise their meetings in December remotely.

1. Endorsement of the proposed decision regarding the third session of European Citizens' Panel 2 in Florence

Gašper Dovžan (Co-Chair) opened the meeting, explaining that the Executive Board had been convened to discuss the implications of the Covid-19 situation for the upcoming European Citizens' Panel in Florence and for the third Conference Plenary in December. He stressed that health considerations needed to be an overarching concern and explained that the aim was to take a joint decision on whether to confirm these events in hybrid format or to postpone them.

Dubravka Šuica (Co-Chair) highlighted the rapidly changing epidemiological situation in Europe. She recalled that session 3 of the European Citizens' Panel 1, that was scheduled to take place in Dublin on 3-5 December, had to be postponed, notably on advice of the partner institute and the national authorities. She noted the different health situation in Italy compared to that in Dublin and that the partner institute advised that it is possible to proceed with the Panel in Florence in hybrid format, respecting all health and sanitary measures in place.

Guy Verhofstadt (Co-Chair) took the view that the Panel should go ahead, noting the positive assessment by the local authorities in Florence and the European University Institute hosting the Panel. He highlighted that the hybrid format would allow for remote participation for those participants who would not be able to travel to Florence and considered that postponements without a clear calendar would endanger the whole Conference.

In the following exchange of views:

- Many participants shared the view that the Panel should go ahead in hybrid format as proposed, taking into account the positive assessment by local authorities and partners and in compliance with the local health and sanitary measures.
- Some participants highlighted the importance to keep the momentum of the Conference and to proceed with the schedule as planned.

- Some participants raised concerns with the worsening health situation in different Member States.
- Some participants noted that remote participation does not allow for the same experience for citizens as the onsite one.

Gašper Dovžan (Co-Chair) concluded that the Executive Board endorsed the proposed decision to hold the third session of European Citizens' Panel 2 in Florence on the scheduled dates of 10-12 December, in full respect of the health measures in place, and in hybrid format.

Conclusion:

The Executive Board endorsed the proposed decision to hold the third session of European Citizens' Panel 2 in Florence on the scheduled dates of 10-12 December, in full respect of the health measures in place, and in hybrid format.

2. Endorsement of the proposed agenda for the December Plenary

Following the decision to hold the third session of Panel 2 in Florence on 10-12 December, Guy Verhofstadt (Co-Chair) outlined the proposed agenda for the Conference Plenary on 17-18 December. He explained that the Plenary would take place in hybrid format and in full respect of the health and sanitary measures in France. He stressed the importance of Panel 2 presenting its recommendations to the Plenary just after their adoption and took the view that not having the Plenary would risk to undermine the dynamic of the Conference.

In the following exchange of views, members and observers of the Executive Board raised arguments either in favour to postpone the Plenary (Covid-19 situation, importance that two Panels per Plenary present their recommendations to avoid a narrow scope of discussions and creating imbalance between panels), or against (importance for the Conference to retain momentum and continue its work; dealing with the recommendations of one Panel would allow for more focussed and meaningful discussions). Some participants noted the different experience for those Members connecting remotely to the Plenary, taking the view that physical presence in Plenary is an important part of the exercise, in particular for citizens.

After weighing all arguments, the Executive Board agreed to postpone the December Conference Plenary. In order to keep the momentum and allow the Conference to continue its work, the Plenary Working Groups could convene their meetings in December remotely.

Conclusion:

The Executive Board decided to postpone the Conference Plenary meeting of 17-18 December due to the evolving COVID-19 situation in several Member States, while allowing the Plenary Working Groups to organise their meetings in December remotely.

Contact: Eva-Maria Poptcheva, member of the Common Secretariat

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

4 December 2021, 11.00-12.00, virtual access

PARTICIPANTS LIST

Green : confirmed remote presence

CO-CHAIR	Mr Guy VERHOFSTADT Member of the European Parliament (Renew Europe, BE)
CO-CHAIR	Mr Gašper DOVŽAN (SI) Secretary of State for EU Affairs
CO-CHAIR	Ms Dubravka ŠUICA Vice-President of the European Commission
MEMBER	Mr Clément BEAUNE (FR) Secretary of State for EU Affairs Represented by Ms Servane METZGER
MEMBER	Ms Milena HRDINKOVÁ (CZ) State Secretary for EU Affairs
MEMBER	Mr Manfred WEBER Member of the European Parliament (EPP, DE)
MEMBER	Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ Vice-President of the European Commission
MEMBER	Ms Věra JOUROVÁ Vice-President of the European Commission
OBSERVER	Ms Judit VARGA (HU) Minister of Justice Represented by Mr Oszkár ÖKRÖS State Secretary
OBSERVER	Mr Hans DAHLGREN (SE) Minister for EU Affairs

OBSERVER	Ms Theodora GENTZIS (BE) Director General for European Affairs Secretary General a.i.
OBSERVER	Mr Daniel FREUND Member of the European Parliament (Greens/EFA, DE)
OBSERVER	Mr Helmut SCHOLZ Member of the European Parliament (The Left, DE)
OBSERVER (COSAC)	Mr Luís Capoulas SANTOS (PT) Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Assembleia da República
OBSERVER (COSAC)	Mr Marko POGAČNIK (SI) Chairperson of the Committee for EU Affairs of the Drzavni Zbor
OBSERVER (CoR) Invited	Mr Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS President of the European Committee of the Regions
OBSERVER (EESC) Invited	Ms Christa SCHWENG President of the European Economic and Social Committee
OBSERVER (SGI Europe) Invited	Ms Valeria RONZITTI Secretary General of SGI Europe
CO-HEAD OF COMMON SECRETARIAT	Ms Marta ARPIO
CO-HEAD OF COMMON SECRETARIAT	Mr Colin SCICLUNA

CO-HEAD OF COMMON SECRETARIAT	Mr Guillaume MCLAUGHLIN
COMMON SECRETARIAT	Ms Marie-Charlotte VAN LAMSWEERDE
COMMON SECRETARIAT	Ms Eva-Maria POPTCHEVA
COMMON SECRETARIAT	Ms Susanne HOEKE

EXCUSED

MEMBER	Ms Iratxe GARCÍA-PÉREZ, Member of the European Parliament (S&D, ES)
OBSERVER	Mr Juan GONZÁLEZ-BARBA PERA (ES) Secretary of State for EU Affairs
OBSERVER	Mr Gerolf ANNEMANS Member of the European Parliament (ID, BE)
OBSERVER (COSAC)	Ms Sabine THILLAYE (FR) Chair of EU Affairs at the Assemblée Nationale
OBSERVER (COSAC)	Mr Jean-François RAPIN (FR) Chair of EU Affairs Committee at the Senat
OBSERVER (COSAC)	Mr Bojan KEKEC (SI) Chairperson of the Commission for International Relations and European Affairs of the Drzavni Svet
OBSERVER (BusinessEurope) Invited	Mr Markus BEYRER Director General of BusinessEurope
OBSERVER (ETUC) Invited	Mr Luca VISENTINI Secretary General of ETUC