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**COVER NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Updated Rules of Procedure of the Conference on the Future of Europe

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Delegations will find attached the updated version of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference on the Future of Europe.



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

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

### **Common Principles**

#### **Article 1**

These Rules of Procedure are established in accordance with the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe laying down the foundations and principles of the Conference.

The Conference is a citizens-focused, bottom-up exercise for Europeans to have their say on what they expect from the European Union.

European citizens from all walks of life and corners of the Union will be able to participate, with young Europeans playing a central role in shaping the future of the European project.

The Conference is placed under the authority of the three institutions, represented by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Council and the President of the European Commission, acting as its Joint Presidency.

A lean governance structure will help steer the Conference. It will ensure an equal representation of the three European institutions and will be gender-balanced, among all its component parts.

The Conference, its governance and events organised in its framework are based on the values of the EU, as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and shall be inclusive, open and transparent.

The Conference shall be recognisable through a single identity and a Conference Charter. The Charter is the set of common principles and criteria, reflecting EU values, to which organisers of events shall subscribe to and to which Conference participants shall adhere to.

A feedback mechanism will ensure that ideas expressed during the Conference events result in concrete recommendations for EU action.

## **Scope**

### **Article 2**

The Conference aims to give citizens a say on what matters to them.

The scope of the Conference should reflect the areas where the European Union has the competence to act or where European Union action would be to the benefit of European citizens.

Reflecting the Strategic Agenda of the European Council, the 2019-2024 Political Guidelines of the European Commission and the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions will cover, amongst others:

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. Discussions can also cover cross-cutting issues related to the EU's ability to deliver on policy priorities, such as better regulation, application of subsidiarity and proportionality, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* and transparency.

Citizens remain free to raise additional issues that matter to them.

## **Citizens' Participation**

### **Article 3**

#### **Multilingual Digital Platform**

The Multilingual Digital Platform shall be the main hub for citizens contributions and information on the different parts of the Conference, the repository of all contributions and documents, an interactive tool to share and debate ideas, and input from the multitude of events taking place under the umbrella of the Conference. Input from citizens' online submissions and all Conference-related events shall be collected, analysed, monitored and published via the digital platform, thereby also ensuring full transparency.

The platform is open directly for citizens, civil society, social partners, and other stakeholders, as well as public authorities at European, national, regional and local level, as long as they subscribe to and respect the Conference Charter. As diverse a group of people as possible, and as many as possible are encouraged to take part.

The moderation of the Platform will be under the supervision of the Common Secretariat acting on behalf of the Executive Board.

## **Article 4**

### **Conference Events**

Events can be organised in a wide variety of formats (including Citizens' panels at national and EU level) organised by the EU institutions and bodies, Member States or others (for example, regional and local authorities, organised civil society, social partners, citizens) under the umbrella of the Conference and in line with the Conference Charter, with a view to reaching the widest possible audience. Outcomes of such events shall be reported on the platform.

Such Conference events, physical gatherings or in digital settings or in a hybrid format, can be organised at different levels, including European, national, transnational, regional and local level and will involve civil society, social partners, and stakeholders<sup>1</sup>. Citizens' participation in these events should aim at mirroring Europe's diversity.

## **Article 5**

### **European Citizens' Panels**

European Citizens' Panels will be organised. Each panel shall consist of a number of citizens in order to ensure at least one female and one male citizen per Member State and taking into account the degressive proportionality principle applied to the composition of the European Parliament. The citizens shall be chosen randomly, and be representative of EU sociological diversity, in terms of citizens' geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and/or level of education. One third of each Citizens' panel shall be composed of people younger than 25.

In addition to the necessary time for preparation, information sharing and feedback, these panels shall meet during deliberative sessions, in different locations, and shall be dedicated to specific themes based on the scope described in Article 2 and citizens' contributions on the digital platform.

Representatives from each European Citizens' Panel, of which at least one third shall be younger than 25, shall take part in the Plenary, present the outcome of their discussions and debate them with other participants.

The panels shall take on board contributions gathered in the framework of the Conference through the digital platform, providing input to the Conference Plenary by formulating a set of recommendations for the Union to follow-up on.

The Co-Chairs of the Executive Board will jointly establish the practical modalities for the organisation of the Conference Citizens' panels, in accordance with the present rules and the Joint Declaration, and inform in advance the Executive Board.

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<sup>1</sup> The Executive Board may consider involving children in the Conference process.

## **Governance of the Conference**

### **Executive Board**

#### **Article 6**

##### **Composition**

The Executive Board consists of an equal representation from the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, each having three representatives and up to four observers.

The presidential Troika of COSAC will participate as a permanent observer.

The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee may also be invited as observers, as well as other EU institutions and bodies and social partners where appropriate<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Article 7**

##### **Tasks and working modalities<sup>3</sup>**

The Executive Board shall act on all matters before it by consensus of the nine representatives

The Executive Board shall be responsible for taking decisions regarding the work of the Conference (the Plenaries, Panels and the Multilingual Digital Platform), 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.

The Executive Board shall agree on a set of common principles and minimum criteria reflecting EU values, "the Conference Charter", to be followed by events organised under the umbrella of the Conference, and on modalities for reporting on the outcomes of the various activities undertaken in the context of the Conference, as well as feedback mechanisms.

The Executive Board shall report on a regular basis to the Joint Presidency (the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Council and the President of the European Commission).

The presence of at least 1/3 of the representatives of each component of the Executive Board (European Parliament, Council and European Commission) is required to enable a meeting to take place and for the Executive Board to act. The Co-Chairs shall check that there is a quorum. Permanent observers and invited observers are not included in the calculation of the quorum.

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<sup>2</sup> European social partners consist of the following entities: Business Europe, ETUC, SGI Europe and SME United. Civil society organisations will be invited for the Conference Plenaries.

<sup>3</sup> Executive Board may wish to consider, in the Conference Plenary rules of procedure, to draw up and publish reports after each Conference Plenary meeting.

The Executive Board shall draw-up and publish the conclusions of the Conference Plenary and present the final outcome of the Conference in a report to the Joint Presidency and their three institutions.

## **Article 8**

### **Common Secretariat**

The Common Secretariat, composed of an equal number of staff respectively from the European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council and the European Commission shall, under the authority of the Executive Board, take all necessary steps to ensure the proper functioning of the Executive Board, and assist the representatives as well as observers of the Executive Board in accordance with these rules.

The co-heads of the Common Secretariat shall attend all meetings of the Executive Board.

The Common Secretariat will support the organisation and procedures of the Conference Plenary and of the European Citizens' Panels.

The Common Secretariat shall assist the Executive Board in ensuring the proper organisation and conduct of the Conference Plenary.

The Common Secretariat shall act independently in accordance with these rules.

## **Article 9**

### **Experts**

The Executive Board can engage experts and invite them to participate in the meetings and events organised in the context of the Conference, especially the Citizens' panels.

## **Article 10**

### **Notice of meetings**

The Executive Board shall be convened by the Co-Chairs.

## **Article 11**

### **Calendar and Agenda**

The Co-Chairs shall draw up the provisional calendar and agendas for the meetings and shall submit them to the Executive Board for approval at the beginning of each meeting.

## **Article 12**

### **Documentation**

The notice and provisional agenda for a meeting of the Executive Board, and any other documents relating to that meeting, shall be sent by the Common Secretariat to the members of the Executive Board and the observers on behalf of the Co-Chairs at the latest two working days before the date of the meeting, unless exceptional cases of urgency require otherwise.

Any representative of the Executive Board or observer may address a written contribution to the Executive Board. Such written contributions shall be circulated by the Common Secretariat to the other representatives of the Executive Board as well as to observers.

Summary reports of the Executive Board meetings will be prepared by the Common Secretariat and endorsed by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Board, where appropriate by written agreement. The summary reports shall be forwarded to the representatives and the observers of that meeting and to the Joint Presidency by the Common Secretariat.

Where the Executive Board acts by issuing reports, the word "reports" shall be inserted in the title. The Common Secretariat shall record any reports under a serial number and with a reference to the date it was approved in view of publishing them on the Multilingual Digital Platform.

## **Article 13**

### **Conduct of meetings**

The meetings of the Executive Board shall be jointly presided by the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs shall agree on sharing chairing arrangements prior to each meeting to ensure equality among them.

The Co-Chairs of the meeting shall ensure the proper conduct of discussions and may take any measure conducive to promoting the best possible use of the time available, such as organising the order in which items are discussed, limiting speaking time and determining the order in which contributors intervene.

The Executive Board, on a proposal of the Co-Chairs, may exceptionally decide to invite other persons to attend an agenda item of a meeting. The Co-Chairs shall decide on which staff, beyond the Common Secretariat members, may attend its meetings.

## **Article 14**

### **Transparency**

Provisional agendas shall be made publicly available before the meeting of the Executive Board takes place. The summary note or other documents that the Executive Board may consider necessary shall be made publicly available after the meeting on the Multilingual Digital Platform.

## **Article 15**

### **Location of meetings**

The Executive Board shall meet in the premises of the Council, unless the Co-Chairs decide otherwise<sup>4</sup>. Participation may be in person or remotely, in accordance with the applicable health and safety regulations in place. The Co-Chairs of the Executive Board will decide on the choice of the electronic platform for hybrid and virtual meetings.

## **Conference Plenary**

### **Article 16**

#### **Composition**

The Conference Plenary shall be composed of 108 representatives from the European Parliament, 54 from the Council and 3 from the European Commission<sup>5</sup>, as well as 108 representatives from all national Parliaments on an equal footing, and citizens.

80 representatives from European Citizens' Panels, of which at least one third shall be younger than 25, the President of the European Youth Forum and 27 representatives<sup>6</sup> of national events and/or national Citizens' Panels will participate. This represents a total of 108.

18 representatives from the Committee of the Regions and 18 from the Economic and Social Committee, 6 elected representatives from regional authorities and 6 elected representatives from local authorities, 12 representatives from the social partners, and 8 from civil society will also participate. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall be invited when the international role of the EU is discussed.

Representatives of key stakeholders may also be invited.

The composition of the Conference Plenary shall respect gender balance.

### **Article 17**

#### **Tasks and working modalities**

The Conference Plenary shall debate and discuss the recommendations from the national and European Citizens' Panels, and the input gathered from the Multilingual Digital Platform, grouped by themes, in full respect of the EU's basic principles and the Conference Charter, without a predetermined outcome and

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<sup>4</sup> Subject to further discussion, the Conference Plenaries and Citizens' Panels could take place in the European Parliament premises. The Common Secretariat will be located in one place as soon as sanitary conditions allow this, ideally in the European Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Other members of the European Commission will participate in the Plenary, notably where matters relevant to their portfolio are to be discussed.

<sup>6</sup> One per Member State.



without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy areas. After these recommendations have been presented by and discussed with citizens, the Plenary will on a consensual basis put forward its proposals<sup>7</sup> to the Executive Board.

The presence of at least 1/3 of each component part invited to the Conference Plenary is required to enable a meeting to take place. The Co-Chairs of the Executive Board shall verify.

## **Article 18**

### **Conclusions of the Plenary**

Based on the Conference Plenary's discussions and proposals, the Executive Board, acting on a consensual basis, shall draw-up a report, in full collaboration and in full transparency with the Conference Plenary, which will then be published on the Multilingual Digital Platform.

## **Article 19**

### **Notice of meetings, calendar, agenda and documentation**

The Co-Chairs, on behalf of the Executive Board, shall convene the Conference Plenaries, on the basis of a calendar agreed by the Executive Board. The agenda for a Conference Plenary meeting shall be proposed by the Executive Board and sent with the relevant documents, as a rule in all the official languages of the Union, by the Common Secretariat at the latest seven working days before the date of the meeting, unless exceptional cases of urgency require otherwise.

## **Article 20**

### **Conduct of meetings**

The meetings of the Conference Plenaries shall be jointly presided by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Board. The Co-Chairs shall agree on sharing chairing arrangements prior to each meeting to ensure equality among them.

The Co-Chairs shall ensure the proper and orderly conduct of discussions and may take any measure conducive to promoting the best possible use of the time available, such as organising the order in which items are discussed, limiting speaking time and determining the order in which contributors intervene.

The Co-Chairs will propose to the Plenary when appropriate the establishment of thematic working groups, in which representatives of the respective Citizens' panels will participate<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Consensus has to be found at least between the representatives of the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission, as well as representatives from national Parliaments, on an equal footing. If there is a clear diverging position from representatives of citizens from national events and/or European or national citizens' panels, this should be expressed in the report by the Executive Board.

<sup>8</sup> Political families can organise caucuses.

The Co-Chairs will jointly establish the practical modalities for the conduct of the Conference Plenary meetings, in accordance with the present rules and the Joint Declaration.

The meetings shall be held in all the official languages of the Union.

## **Article 21**

### **Location of meetings**

The Conference Plenary shall meet on the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, unless the Co-Chairs decide otherwise.

The Co-Chairs of the Executive Board shall decide whether participation may be in person or remote or hybrid, in accordance with the applicable health and safety regulations in place.

The Co-Chairs will decide on the choice of the electronic platform for hybrid and virtual meetings.

## **Article 22**

### **Transparency**

The meetings of the Conference Plenary shall be live-streamed and all the documents of the Conference Plenary shall be made publicly available on the Multilingual Digital Platform.

## **Final Provisions**

### **Article 23**

The final outcome of the Conference will be presented in a report to the Joint Presidency. The three institutions will examine swiftly how to follow up effectively to this report, each within their own sphere of competences and in accordance with the Treaties.

### **Article 24**

The Rules of Procedure may be amended or supplemented by the Executive Board on a proposal by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Board.

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