



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 15 July 2022
(OR. en)

11260/22

LIMITE

SAN 454
PHARM 130

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Public Health (High Level)
Subject:	Recommendations of the Conference on the Future of Europe in the area of Public Health - <i>Exchange of views</i>

Delegations will find in the Annex a note prepared by the Presidency on the subject above, which will be the basis for an exchange of views at the meeting of the Working Party on Public Health (High Level) on 26 July 2022.

Outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The Conference on the Future of Europe, which kicked off on Europe Day 2021 and ran for one year, was an unprecedented pan-European exercise in deliberative democracy - the largest and broadest of its kind ever seen. It connected people of all ages, countries, and backgrounds, many of whom had never engaged with Europe or had not been familiar with the European Union's institutional make-up. They all brought their different stories and perspectives, their different languages and identities to set out their expectations of Europe and to weave together a vision of its future.

The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission have committed to listen to Europeans which is why they convened the Conference. A year after the opening of the Conference, the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and the French President Emmanuel Macron on behalf of the Council of the EU received a final report with proposals and measures prepared during the closing ceremony in Strasbourg.

From the very beginning of the Conference, the actors involved had very different expectations regarding the project's outputs, from the opening of the Treaties currently in force to the mere listing and presentation of recommendations made in citizens' panels. Subsequently, the Conference was overshadowed to some extent by the war in Ukraine and thus delayed.

For the Conference to be successful, it will be necessary to find a political consensus across Member States and the European institutions on what are the results expected to be and how the new reality in which Europe finds itself in is to be reflected, speaking both of the Russian aggression and the ever looming covid threat.

If Member States avoided drawing conclusions from the outputs, they could seriously jeopardize the EU's reputation. At the same time, it will be very important for the whole process to not be unnecessarily rushed. It will be important to allow more time and attention to ensure that the proposed outputs are adequately discussed at the political level.

In addition to the need to communicate the tangible results of citizens' panels and implement the outcomes of the Conference, the Conference itself can also be an opportunity to bring the EU closer to its citizens and to involve them more actively in decision-making at European level. The fact that the Conference has created new communication channels for European citizens offers opportunities to continue to mediate the involvement of citizens across the EU and to maintain regular communication between the EU and its citizens after the end of the Conference.

Throughout a year of events, citizens' panel discussions and ideas collected online, 49 proposals and 326 specific measures have crystallised, structuring around nine themes, one of them being Health. The General Secretariat of the Council prepared extensive summary of all proposals including their preliminary technical assessment (ST 10033/22 + ADD 1, p. 40-51).

The General Affairs Council has had an initial discussion on the substance of the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe's final report on 21 June 2022. Followed by European Council meeting on 23 and 24 June, which took note of the proposals set out in the Report on the outcome of the Conference. The European Council also stressed that an effective follow-up to this report is to be ensured by the institutions, each within their own sphere of competences and in accordance with the Treaties. The European Council noted that work has already been undertaken in this regard and recalled the importance of ensuring that citizens are informed of the follow-up to the proposals made in the Report.

Czech Presidency would like to discuss with Member States the proposals and measures targeted at the area of public health and health protection.

Specifically, the following proposals bear the most relevance to the area of health:

- a) Reinforce the healthcare system
- b) A broader understanding of Health
- c) Equal access to health for all

With more individual measures related to each of these proposals.

The follow-up to the outcome of the Conference is a shared responsibility of the participating institutions, according to their institutional remit and in respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Clear and effective communication will be essential in this follow-up, notably to ensure buy-in from citizens and build trust in the process and its outcomes.

Open debate among Member States on the proposals and measures and a possible way forward is needed. The debate is necessary also in respect to the follow-up meeting planned for Autumn this year. To keep the gained momentum, a Conference Feedback Event will take place, and it will be a perfect time and place to create a clear and cohesive link between the outcomes of the Conference and the future activities that is has inspired.

To facilitate the debate, representatives of Member States are invited to reflect on following questions:

1. The report on the final outcome of the Conference contains quite a few proposals relating to the health agenda. How do you plan to deliberate on them at national level?
2. Horizontal discussions on the follow up to the recommendations by the Council take place in the General Affairs Council (prepared by the General Affairs Group). Have your national administrations set up coordination to allow for the horizontal level to receive input from the relevant sectors, including health? And from your point of view what would be the topics to handle as a priority in the area of health?