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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Preparation for the General Affairs Council on 22 March 2022
– Conference on the Future of Europe

Delegations will find attached an adjusted version of the non-paper drawn up by the Presidency on the Conference on the Future of Europe for the discussion at the General Affairs Council meeting on 22 March 2022.

Non-paper on the Conference on the Future of Europe – proposal by the French Presidency

Following discussions between the Member States at the last formal and informal GACs, the Presidency proposes the following methodology. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Declaration and the Rules of Procedure, and makes it possible for the Conference to complete its work by 9 May 2022.

Joint Declaration

'A Conference Plenary will ensure that the recommendations from the national and European citizens' panels, grouped by themes, are debated without a predetermined outcome and without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy areas. [...] The Executive Board will draw and publish the conclusions of the Conference Plenary.

The structures of the Conference will agree from the outset and on a consensual basis on the modalities for reporting on the outcomes of the various activities undertaken in the context of the Conference. 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.'

Rules of Procedure

Article 17 – Tasks and working modalities of the Conference Plenary: *‘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 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 to the Executive Board. [...]*

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.’

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.’*

Proposed methodology

1) Recommendations from the citizens' panels

On the basis of the recommendations adopted by the European and national citizens' panels, and the contributions from the multilingual digital platform (based on the final report by Kantar), the Common Secretariat will group the recommendations into thematic clusters in a neutral and objective manner. For each cluster, proposals will be drawn up by the Common Secretariat on a proposal from the chair and the citizens' spokesperson for each working group concerned. These proposals must comprise two elements: (1) a general policy objective, and (2) a set of measures for implementing it. All of the recommendations adopted by the citizens' panels must be included in the proposals.

The working groups will focus their work on the recommendations of the citizens' panels, without proposing new measures. Contributions from the multilingual digital platform may be used to complement and illustrate existing citizen measures.

2) Plenary discussions and proposals

The Plenary will discuss and debate these proposals in working groups at its plenary meetings on 25 and 26 March and 8 and 9 April.

The members of the Council component will in particular have the opportunity to discuss the feasibility and legislative implications of the proposed measures in the light of the following criteria: existing EU policies, proposals requiring legislative amendments, and measures that require changes to the Treaties.

The working groups will have to incorporate, in a transparent manner, the positions and analyses put forward at the plenary meetings in order to arrive at consolidated proposals before the plenary meeting on 29 and 30 April. At this last plenary meeting, the consolidated proposals for each working group will be presented to the entire plenary assembly.

Each Plenary component will determine which of the consolidated proposals on the list have the highest priority. The Plenary will propose an indicative ranking of all proposals to the Executive Board, thus ensuring the added value of the Plenary while retaining all of the citizens' initial recommendations.

3) Drafting of the final report by the Executive Board

Between the last Plenary (29 and 30 April) and the closing event on 9 May, the Executive Board will determine the manner in which it wishes to present the Conference conclusions in the final report, which will be submitted to the Joint Presidency on 9 May. We propose that the final report be organised as follows: (1) a brief activity report, and (2) a presentation of the final proposals, covering all of the citizens' recommendations in hierarchical order.

4) Closing event on 9 May

On 9 May, the three Co-Chairs of the Executive Board will submit the final report to the Joint Presidency of the Conference (Presidents of the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU). Each institution will then be responsible for implementing the final proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe, within its remit. The Co-Chairs will ensure follow-up and provide the members of the Plenary with feedback on the state of play and implementation of the proposals.
