



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Ondřej BENEŠÍK
Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
of the Poslanecká sněmovna
Sněmovní 4
CZ – 118 26 PRAGUE 1*

*Cc Ms Markéta PEKAROVÁ ADAMOVÁ
President of the Poslanecká sněmovna
Sněmovní 4
CZ – 118 26 PRAGUE 1*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Poslanecká sněmovna for its Opinion on the Communication ‘Conference on the Future of Europe - Putting Vision into Concrete Action’ {COM(2022) 404 final}.

The Conference provided a space for citizens, the European institutions, national, regional and local decision-makers to join forces, thereby further strengthening our representative democracy. On 9 May 2022, the final report was presented to the Presidents of the three institutions, containing 49 proposals with ambitious and forward-looking objectives.

The long-term success of the Conference hinges on the changes it can deliver - a message that was reaffirmed in the Commission Work Programme for 2023¹. The Communication ‘Putting Vision into Concrete Action’ was the first step in the Commission follow-up, offering an assessment of the Conference proposals and a roadmap for the next steps.

The Commission has carefully analysed the Opinion of the Poslanecká sněmovna. The Poslanecká sněmovna raises concerns about what it sees as poor awareness in Member States regarding the holding of the Conference and notes that the final proposals do not fully reflect the views of national Parliaments.

The Commission is pleased to have the opportunity to provide some clarifications regarding its Communication and hopes that these will allay the concerns of the Poslanecká sněmovna.

¹ COM(2022) 548 final, 18.10.2022

The communication on the Conference was a joint responsibility of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, which committed to ensure wide outreach. The institutions called upon other stakeholders, including national and regional Parliaments and civil society organisations, to join them in these efforts and report on their outcome. By the Conference's conclusion in May, 7,005 events had been recorded on the digital platform, which was the hub of the Conference, involving around 650,000 participants. In Czechia, 114 events were held, including milestone meetings organised by the Government Office and the Commission Representation in Prague. As a result of the joint communication efforts of all the institutions, Member States and stakeholders involved in the Conference, the multilingual digital platform has attracted more than 5 million visits. Crucially, the communication of the Conference follow-up is also a shared responsibility.

As for the support of national Parliaments to the 49 proposals in the final report of the Conference, the Commission notes that, as per the Conference's Rules of Procedure², the proposals were put forward on a consensual basis by the four component parts of the Conference Plenary. The 108 representatives of national Parliaments, including 4 from Czechia, participating to the Conference, have been a full-fledged component of the Plenary and its discussions. They and the other components deliberated on an equal footing and the consensus of all components was required for the Conference to put forward proposals. This reflects the commitment of the institutions to equal representation, as the Commission noted in an earlier reply to an Opinion of the Poslanecká sněmovna (C(2021) 4972 final).

The Commission also notes that the Opinion of the Poslanecká sněmovna opposes a Treaty Convention, prompting to first consider all other institutional means at disposal to bring about the changes requested by the Conference's proposals. As indicated in the Communication, the Commission will always support reforms that could make the European Union work better. The Commission stands ready to play its institutional role in line with the Treaties.

The Commission is pleased that the Poslanecká sněmovna shares the view on the importance to further support public engagement in Member States through digital tools. The Conference's multilingual digital platform was developed as a unique tool dedicated to the Conference's deliberative process. Building on the experience gained from this exercise, the Commission will improve its online engagement with citizens, including through an update to the 'Have Your Say' portal that will serve as a single-entry point to all existing and future participatory tools. The portal will embed some of the functionalities of the Conference's multilingual digital platform and feature a new online engagement tool. Functionalities will include – among others – e-translation and online polling. We naturally encourage other stakeholders, including national Parliaments, to play their role in ensuring that engagement with citizens on European matters can be smooth, meaningful and accurate.

² [Rules of Procedure of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

Further, the Commission would like to inform the Poslanecká sněmovna on the continued follow-up to the Conference. A feedback event was organised on 2 December 2022 in Brussels where the three institutions informed the citizens who had participated in the European Citizens' Panels, as well as representatives of National Citizens' Panels and events, together with other participants in the Plenary, including national parliamentarians, on how they are following up on the Conference proposals. A first set of new proposals responding to the Conference outcomes has been included in the 2023 Commission Work Programme. 35 out of the 43 new initiatives announced respond directly or indirectly to the challenges underlined by citizens during the Conference. In addition, a new generation of citizens' panels is becoming a part of our policymaking cycle. The panels will make recommendations that will be a key contribution to the preparation of policy proposals. The first three panels will address food waste, learning mobility and virtual worlds. The panel on food waste was launched on 16 December 2022.

We hope that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Poslanecká sněmovna and look forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*