



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2023) 856 final*

*Miloš VYSTRČIL
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1*

Dear President,

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

Through this Communication, the Commission acted on its commitment made in the Joint Declaration of March 2021¹, along with both the European Parliament and Council, to follow up on the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe within the framework of its competences and in accordance with the Treaties.

In times of global challenges and crises, there is a growing demand for having citizens playing a leading and active role in setting our common priorities and level of ambition. The Conference on the Future of Europe allowed citizens, the European institutions, and national, regional, and local politicians to join their forces, thereby further strengthening our representative democracy.

Our Communication represented the first step in the Commission follow-up, by offering an assessment of the Conference proposals and a roadmap of the next steps. Citizens need to see that their proposals are being followed upon. The Commission stuck to the letter and spirit of the recommendations made in the Conference in order to ensure that this assessment is credible. The long-term success of the Conference on the Future of Europe hinges on the changes it can deliver, as also recalled in the Commission Work Programme 2023 adopted on 18 October 2022.

¹ [IJ C 91I, 18.3.2021, p. 1-4.](#)

The Commission analysed the Opinion of the Sénat, which appealed to European authorities to consider the Conference proposals that are within their remit and implement them, while expressing the preference for the implementation of ongoing initiatives in the topic of health before opening discussions on Treaty change.

The Commission will continue to pursue an effective follow up of the Conference proposals in the most effective manner. The first new proposals responding to the Conference were announced by President von der Leyen in her State of the Union address. The Conference's conclusions are the main drivers of the Commission Work Programme 2023, where more than 80 percent of all new initiatives are linked directly or indirectly to the Conference proposals.

Regarding the follow-up on the proposals on health, the Commission is of the view that new reforms and policies should not be mutually exclusive to discussions on Treaty change. For most Conference proposals and measures there is much that can and will need to be done under the existing Treaties. In some cases, the proposals of the Conference feed into the preparation of policy initiatives that are already ongoing. In others, such as for example in the case of mental health, the Commission is venturing into a new field following up on the conclusions of the Conference. A new Commission initiative on a comprehensive approach to mental health is specifically included in next year's work programme.

As a part of its follow-up and building on the success of the Conference, the Commission is also embedding participatory practices in its policy-making toolbox. A new generation of citizens' panels is becoming a part of our policymaking cycle. From December 2022 and through 2023, three panels, each with a new group of randomly selected citizens, will deliberate on the initiatives that are planned on food waste, virtual worlds and learning mobility. They will make recommendations that will be a key contribution to the preparation of the policy proposals. The first session on food waste started already on 16 December 2022, as announced during the feedback event. By supporting these deliberative processes, the Commission aims to strengthen our representative democracy.

We are also deploying wider efforts to strengthen Europe's democracy and public space, including by developing the Have Your Say portal into a one-stop-shop for online citizen engagement. This will make it easier for citizens to engage with the Commission online by bringing together all information on citizens' engagement mechanisms running in the Commission including public consultations, the European Citizens' Initiative, and the new generation of citizens' panels. It will also include the Child Participation Platform which was launched in September, and which provides our youngest citizens with the opportunity to offer their views on the issues that matter most to them.

The Commission and the Sénat share a firm commitment to continue following up on the conclusions of the Conference. The political dialogue with national Parliaments is

essential for linking the institutions and the citizens of the European Union and the Commission therefore looks forward to continuing it with the Senát in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*