



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.5.2020
C(2020) 3373 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication, 'Shaping the Conference on the Future of Europe' {COM(2020) 27 final}. The Commission is pleased that the Bundesrat shares the aim of the Conference on the Future of Europe: to give a new push for European democracy by ensuring a greater involvement of European citizens in the Union's policy-making.

Today, we are in very different circumstances to when the Commission adopted its Communication. Even if the context has changed due to the coronavirus pandemic, our determination to engage with citizens and ensure their voice is heard in Europe has not changed. The Conference on the future of Europe remains crucial.

As the Bundesrat stressed in its Opinion, when selecting participants in citizens' dialogues, attention should be paid to the widest possible range of different views. The Conference should be open to participation of civil society, the EU institutions and other EU bodies, such as the Committee of the Regions, national and regional parliaments, public authorities and other stakeholders.

The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's support for the feedback mechanism it has proposed and stands ready to follow up on what is debated and agreed during the Conference, as pledged by President Ursula von der Leyen in her political guidelines.

The Commission also welcomes the Bundesrat's agreement that the topics for discussion should be set on the basis of the European Union's current political priorities and that the agenda should be complemented in the light of the Conference's ongoing opinion-forming process. While these political priorities frame the debate, they should not limit the scope of the Conference. Citizens should be free to focus on what they consider to be important.

*Mr Dietmar WOIDKE
President of the Bundesrat
Leipziger Straße 3 - 4
10117 BERLIN*

Concerning the role of national Parliaments during the Conference, as the Commission set out in its Communication of 22 January {COM(2020) 27 final}, national and regional Parliaments and actors have an important role to play and should be encouraged to organise Conference-related events. The Commission shares the view of the Bundesrat that an early and effective involvement of national Parliaments can ensure that the Conference reaches as many EU citizens as possible.

The exact details of how to involve national Parliaments will be addressed by the European Parliament, Council and Commission in a Joint Declaration still to be negotiated. This Joint Declaration will define the objectives, scope and setting up of the Conference. The Commission would like this Joint Declaration to be open to other signatories who want to actively contribute to the Conference, which can include individual national Parliaments.

Germany has a key role to play in the roll-out of the Conference on the Future of Europe, as it will hold the Presidency of the Council in the second half of 2020. The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's continued involvement in the Conference on the Future of Europe and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*