



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2022) 7153 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Conference on the Future of Europe, Putting Vision into Concrete Action {COM(2022) 404 final}. The Commission has attentively taken note of the Bundesrat's positions regarding individual conclusions of the Conference.

The Conference was an unprecedented pan-European exercise in participatory democracy – the largest and most inclusive of its kind ever. It brought together people of all ages, from all corners of Europe from across societies, many of whom had never been involved with Europe. More than 5 million people visited the Conference's multilingual digital platform and more than 6 600 consultations and discussions were organised across Europe as a part of the process.

As set out in its Communication, the Commission is committed to follow up on the Conference's conclusions within its remit and respecting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. It will do so in the most pragmatic way possible, whether through legislative action or otherwise.

The first new proposals in response to the Conference have been announced in the context of the State of the Union address. These proposals will be amongst those to be included in the 2023 Commission Work Programme. Some should also feature in the joint legislative priorities agreed between the European Union institutions and future Commission Work Programmes.

In the Commission's view, the vast majority of the Conference's proposals can be followed up under the existing treaties, however, the Commission recognises that in some cases the follow-up implies the need for a change of the treaties, while in some other cases the proposals themselves explicitly call for treaty change.

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The Commission would like to recall – as stated in its Communication – that there is untapped potential within the existing treaties, notably the use of the ‘passerelle clauses’ to move to qualified majority voting in certain policy fields.

The Conference has sparked a broader discussion on how to improve the European project. As outlined by President von der Leyen in her speech to the Conference, the Commission will always be on the side of those who want to reform the European Union to make it work better, including through Treaty change where that may be necessary.

The Commission shares the view of the Bundesrat that participatory initiatives are a valuable complement to representative democracy. For this reason, the Commission will enable Citizens Panels to deliberate and make recommendations ahead of certain key proposals, as part of our wider policy making and in line with Better Regulation principles.

The 'Have Your Say' portal¹, which already includes information on upcoming Commission initiatives and allows all European citizens and stakeholders to share their feedback and contribute in any of the European Union official languages at different stages of the legislative and policy preparation process, will also become a single entry point for online citizen engagement. It will bring together all information on – current and future – citizens’ engagement mechanisms running in the Commission.

The Commission believes that the political dialogue with national Parliaments is essential for linking the institutions and the citizens of the European Union and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Bundesrat in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say_en