



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 24.3.2020
C(2020) 1815 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Seimas for its Opinion on the scope and organisation of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Seimas for the initiative on the Conference on the Future of Europe and agrees that the aim is to hear the voices of citizens. The Commission would also like to stress that the Conference must be more than a listening exercise and should ultimately strive for a greater say of citizens in the Union's policy-making. This also means reaching out beyond the capitals and involving citizens from every corner of our Union and from all walks of life. The Commission fully agrees that the Conference on the Future of Europe offers a welcome opportunity to identify the challenges we face and find ways to address them, with the emphasis on the role of citizens in doing so.

The Commission also agrees that national Parliaments should play a key role in the Conference. It welcomes all formal contributions from national Parliaments so that these ideas can be taken into consideration and therefore thanks the Seimas for its Opinion.

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 acknowledges the significant experience of Member States regarding different forms of citizens' consultations and participatory and deliberative democratic events, such as the citizens' assemblies organised in some Member States. The Commission therefore shares the view of the Seimas that national Parliaments have the potential to make a significant contribution to the success of the Conference in terms of experience, organising events, and ensuring the Conference reaches as many citizens as possible.

*Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS
Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
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*cc. Mr Viktoras PRANCKIETIS
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The Commission also agrees with the Seimas that the content of the Conference should be framed while allowing for an open discussion amongst citizens. For these reasons, the Commission agrees that the topics contained in the Strategic Agenda should be the focus, along with the 2019-2024 Political Guidelines of the Commission on the basis of which President von der Leyen was elected by the European Parliament. The Commission shares the view of the Seimas that Treaty change should not be the overarching purpose of the Conference.

The Commission also agrees with the Seimas on the importance of feedback, which it also believes should be translated into concrete recommendations for future EU action. As President von der Leyen set out in her Political Guidelines¹, the Commission is ready to follow up on what is agreed, including by legislative action if appropriate and in line with institutional prerogatives and competences.

While the European Parliament, Council and Commission will negotiate the text of the Joint Declaration establishing the Conference, the Commission can assure you that the early involvement of national parliaments is already shaping this process. This Joint Declaration should set the scope, objectives and composition of the Conference. The Commission would like it to be open to other signatories who want to actively contribute to the Conference. This can include individual national Parliaments.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Seimas and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*

¹ 'Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019 – 2024'
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf