



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Sejm for its Opinion on the Conference on the Future of Europe.

As stated in its Communication “Shaping the Conference on the Future of Europe” of 22 January 2020 {COM(2020) 27 final}, the Commission would like to see the Conference being open to civil society, the European institutions and other European bodies. This includes the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as national, regional and local authorities, parliaments and other stakeholders – “all contributing as equal partners”.

The Commission believes that national Parliaments have an important role to play and should be encouraged to organise and participate in conference related events. National Parliaments have the potential to make a significant contribution to the success of the Conference on the Future of Europe, in terms of organising engagement activities and ensuring that the Conference reaches as many citizens as possible.

The Commission acknowledges the view of the Sejm that national Parliaments should be equally represented in the work of the Conference and understands this as pertaining to all aspects of the Conference. At present, the preparatory work on the Joint Declaration establishing the Conference is still underway and the engagement of national Parliaments is already strong with a number of opinions received within the permanent structured dialogue, as well as the exchanges held in the framework of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union, respectively in Helsinki from 1 to 3 December 2019 and in Zagreb on 19 and 20 January 2020.

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

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early involvement of national Parliaments is already shaping this process. This Joint Declaration should set the scope, format, structure and objectives 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 respective national Parliaments.

The Commission considers that national Parliaments have a central role for linking the citizens and the EU institutions. It fully agrees with the Sejm that their early involvement in the decision-making process is desirable. It sees the increasing proportion, in the political dialogue, of own-initiative opinions not related to an already adopted Commission proposal as a sign for the national Parliaments' interest in providing forward-looking political input to the Commission as early as possible in the decision-making process. It understands, in this regard, the concept of "active subsidiarity" as meaning that all relevant actors, be they institutional, national or sub-national, constructively contribute to developing the added value of EU legislation throughout the policymaking process. It agrees with the Sejm that establishing a specific channel for national Parliaments to consult with the Commission at the early stages of drafting a legislative proposal will make this constructive contribution easier and is currently preparing such a tool.

The Commission is committed to ensure that its proposals are evidence based, widely consulted upon, and subject to an impact assessment reviewed by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board. As announced in its Work Programme 2020, the Commission will adopt in the second quarter of 2020 a Communication on Better Regulation, which is at the heart of its policy-making.

The Commission also agrees with the Sejm on the need to increase the transparency of the legislative process, for example with regard to the so-called trilogue negotiations, but would like to underline that this is a matter foremost for the European Parliament and the Council.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*