



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Speaker,

The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Communication 'Shaping the Conference on the Future of Europe' {COM(2020) 27 final}. It welcomes the support of the Riksdag for the initiative on the Conference on the Future of Europe and agrees that its aim is to hear the voices of citizens.

Today, we are in very different circumstances to when the Riksdag adopted its Opinion. The coronavirus pandemic knows no borders and its economic, social and psychological hardship is being felt by all. European solidarity is at the heart of the Commission's unprecedented measures to fight this virus. Once we have successfully fought the virus, we should seek to draw lessons from the present crisis and consider how we can make our European Union more resilient, sustainable and fair. As the Riksdag rightly notes in its Opinion, this can only be done by involving our citizens - those whom we serve. The Commission very much values the Riksdag's engagement in this regard.

The Commission agrees that the Conference on the Future of Europe offers an opportunity to give European citizens a greater say on what the Union does and how it works for them. This also means reaching out beyond the capitals and involving citizens from every corner of our Union and from all walks of life, including young Europeans playing a central role in determining the future of the European project. The Commission also agrees that this process should be seen as a complement to representative democracy.

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 Parliaments and regional and local authorities have an important role to play throughout the Conference. The Commission therefore shares the view of the Riksdag 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 Andreas Norlén
Speaker of the Riksdag
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*

When it comes to the topics for discussion during the Conference, the Commission believes that the EU's headline ambitions, as set out in the Commission's Political Priorities and the European Council's Strategic Agenda, indeed provide a broad framework to allow citizens to focus on what they consider to be important. The Commission takes note of the Riksdag's view that the work of the Conference should be carried out on the basis of the current EU Treaties. Without pre-empting the discussions that are yet to take place in the context of the Conference, the Commission is ready to play its role in exploring how the EU can improve its democratic processes and its legitimacy.

When it comes to the governance structure supporting the Conference, the Commission agrees with the Riksdag that ensuring gender equality will be crucial.

Finally, the Commission agrees with the Riksdag on the importance of feedback, which it also believes should be translated into concrete recommendations for future EU action. As set out in its Communication of 22 January {COM(2020) 27 final}, the Commission is ready to follow up on what is debated and agreed during the Conference. This is a key deliverable and a novelty of the Conference, which should ultimately show that participating in democracy is a constant process that thrives beyond elections.

While the European Parliament, Council and Commission are yet to negotiate a Joint Declaration on the objectives, scope and setting up of the Conference, the Commission can assure you that the early involvement of national Parliaments is already shaping this process. 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.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President*