

Brussels, 25 February 2022

To: Co-Chairs of the COFOE Executive Board
: Members of the COFOE Executive Board
: Observers of the COFOE Executive Board

Letter sent by e-mail

Urgent message on the role of social partners, EESC and organised civil society in the COFOE decision-making processes

Dear Co-Chairs of the Executive Board,

Dear members,

Dear observers,

We would like to thank the Co-Chairs for their work in defining the non-paper “From citizens’ recommendations to Plenary proposals”.

The paper brings some much-needed clarity in the decision-making processes of the Conference.

Unfortunately, the document still contains some important shortcomings which must be addressed.

In particular, the paper does not recognise the key role of social partners, the European Economic and Social Committee and organised civil society in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Such role has always been recognised, starting with the Joint Declaration, which stated that our involvement was key and included our representatives in the COFOE Plenary and Executive Board.

To address this key shortcoming, it is necessary to ensure that:

1. In addition to the specific positions taken by the 4 institutional components – also the whole WGs and the whole Plenary take a position on the proposals. In any case, it should be ensured that all the members of the Plenary and of the WGs can express their positions on the proposals. This is necessary to recognise the role that all members of the Plenary have played in the Conference, in line with the Joint Declaration and the Rules of Procedure.
2. Before the definition of the revised proposals to be put to vote in the April II Plenary, components of the Plenary/WGs comprising the EESC, social partners, organised civil society at large should be specifically consulted on the proposals. We should be able to express our views on the proposals to the relevant WGs before they are revised and finalised.
3. In the mechanism foreseen in Part 4 of the non-paper on “Presentation of the final proposals of plenary [...]”, it should also be possible for components of the Plenary other than the Commission, the EP, the Council and national Parliaments and citizens to express their views on the final Recommendations. Such opinions should be attached to the final report as well. This possibility is not excluded by the Rules of Procedure and is consistent with the general inclusive approach of the Joint Declaration so as that all Plenary components can have a voice in the definition of the final report.
4. In our view, as currently outlined in the Rules of Procedure, contributions from members of the Plenary (including in the WGs) and from the online platform should be consistently considered next to the contributions from the citizens’ panels. This should be addressed.

For this reason, the third column should be separated into two columns in the proposed tables to gather respectively (iii) the inputs from Plenary members (including in the WGs) and (iv) the inputs provided in the online platform – which should not be merged.

We ask you to discuss these issues during the meeting of the Executive board scheduled for 1 March and to solve these shortcomings as a matter of urgency.

It is of paramount importance to ensure that these issues are solved positively, to maintain our positive engagement in the Conference.

Looking forward to your feedback,

We would like to thank you very much in advance.

Best regards,

Luca Visentini, ETUC General Secretary

Markus J. Beyrer, BusinessEurope Director
General

Valeria Ronzitti, SGI Europe General Secretary

Véronique Willems, SMEunited General
Secretary

Christa Schweng, President of the European
Economic and Social Committee

Alexandrina Najmowicz and Milosh Ristovski,
Co-Chairs of the Civil Society Convention on the
Future of Europe

Petros Fassoulas, Secretary General of the
European Movement International