

During the Conference Plenary of 10-12 March, the last four thematic debates have taken place on the basis of recommendations of European Citizens' Panels 1 and 4, as well as recommendations from national citizens' panels. The question is now how the Conference Plenary can meaningfully process all the input and develop concrete and meaningful political proposals in the run-up to the final high-level Conference event on 9 May 2022, and how the Conference outcomes will be followed up on afterwards. We present to you five requests for the final phase of the Conference.

### **1. Create and communicate a clear plan for the rest of the Conference**

The rules and timeline for the remaining one and a half months of the Conference are still not fully clear. The Co-Chairs have agreed on adding an extra Plenary session from 28-30 April, but this proposal still needs to be ratified by the Executive Board, which has not met since December. Additionally, the detailed procedure and timeline leading to the adoption of Conference Plenary proposals (see Article 17 of the Rules of Procedure) is not defined, let alone communicated. This lack of clarity leads to distrust among Plenary members and the leading bodies and personalities of the Conference, undermining the whole Conference process. It is of critical importance that these issues are resolved in a satisfactory manner, facilitating a transparent and accountable process (see this [6-step plan](#) and a related [joint letter to the Conference Chairs](#)). Additionally, Conference Plenary members need to be adequately informed about the purpose and agenda of the upcoming Plenary and about the next steps in the process.

### **2. Focus on the most politically ambitious recommendations**

Over the course of the next one and a half months (with three more foreseen Plenary meetings – 24-26 March, 7-9 April and 28-30 April), it is impossible to discuss and decide on the desired follow-up to be given to all of the 178 European Citizens' Panel recommendations in full detail, let alone to consider all other Conference input. Therefore, the Conference Plenary will need to prioritise. There is a certain number of recommendations that could be implemented relatively easily by individual actors at various political levels, because they do not challenge the status quo in a significant manner. However, there are also recommendations that would necessitate legislative action by the EU institutions, EU treaty change or even constitutional reform at the national level. The implementation of this last category of recommendations would require a lot of political will and constructive cooperation among many actors at various political levels. Due to the broad composition of the Conference Plenary, bringing together political actors from local to European level, as well as citizens and civil society, the Conference Plenary is the place *par excellence* to seriously consider and take a stance on such recommendations. Furthermore, focusing on the most ambitious recommendations is the best way to ensure that the Conference will have a significant political impact on the future of Europe.

### **3. Find a consensus on the need for & modalities of EU constitutional reform**

The question of EU treaty change (constitutional reform) is the big pink elephant in the Conference. While it should have been clarified from the very start that exploring the need for EU treaty change is one of the objectives of the Conference, the Conference Plenary should now finally explicitly address this question on the basis of the concrete panel recommendations and other Conference input that would require EU treaty change to be implemented. If it were to be decided that treaty change is necessary, the Conference Plenary should also specify how they expect treaty change to be implemented in the most

inclusive, transparent and accountable manner, including by considering the option of an EU-wide referendum at the end of a possible constitutional reform process. By addressing and resolving this question of treaty change in a meaningful and publicly accountable manner, the EU will have the opportunity to process the trauma it experienced from the last comprehensive exercise in treaty revision. A failure to do so would not only be a missed opportunity, it would also undermine public and political trust in the very possibility of reforming the European Union ever again.

#### **4. Bring in previously excluded voices and perspectives**

The Conference has been designed in a very top-down manner by the three EU institutions. While the Joint Declaration lists 'inclusiveness' as one of the three main principles of the Conference, it has not been put into practice properly (see this [press release](#), this joint [letter to the Executive Board](#), a follow-up [letter to the Conference Plenary](#), and another [press release](#)). However, it is never too late to learn from past mistakes and do better. In this critical final phase of the Conference, the Conference Plenary should organise targeted consultation with marginalised communities in order to maximise the chances for the successful development and implementation of Conference Plenary proposals, and to prevent that the Conference reproduces existing structural inequalities in society. A very first step could be to invite the EU's very own Anti-racism Coordinator, Michaela Moua, to the next Conference Plenary on 24-26 March.

#### **5. Define a Conference follow-up timeline and related commitments**

While we recommend the Conference Plenary to focus on the most politically ambitious recommendations within the remaining one and a half months until the end of the Conference, this is not to imply that other recommendations are of lesser importance. We call for each and every one of the 178 European Citizens' Panel recommendations to receive a written reply from the three EU institutions, the actors that invited panel members to participate in the first place (see our joint [letter to the Executive Board](#)). In order to ensure that the EU institutions meet this expectation and do justice to the Conference outcomes in a timely manner, the Executive Board needs to propose a concrete timeline for the follow-up on the European Citizens' Panel recommendations and the other Conference outcomes. Each of the three EU institutions should first individually consider all Conference outcomes and develop a detailed report based on a common format. In this report, it should address the foreseen or already taken actions to follow up on recommendations and proposals. These three reports should be presented and discussed during a first post-Conference Plenary meeting, e.g. in December 2022. In a second instance, the three EU institutions need to sit together to agree on and develop one single overarching report on the follow-up given on the Conference outcomes. This final report should then once again be presented and discussed during a second and final post-Conference Plenary meeting, e.g. on 9 May 2023.