

Is your work relevant to the Conference on the Future of Europe?

Submission Invitation

Dear EUI Colleagues,

As most of you are aware, the European Institutions – meaning the Parliament, Commission, and Council – have launched a massive listening campaign called ‘Conference on the Future of Europe’. The [goal of the exercise](#) is to bring Europe closer to the people by engaging with European citizens as directly as possible. This engagement will take place both online and in person with the goal of drawing inspiration from the bottom up about where Europe should be headed.

This may seem like an aspirational initiative rather than an effort at introducing reforms or building institutions. But this is a feature, not a bug. In fact, the European Convention that took place in the early 2000s pointed in the other direction, namely toward concrete reform measures. That Convention was meant to meet the goals of the Laeken Declaration to bring Europe closer to the people. The referendums that took place in France and the Netherlands in 2005 suggest that effort – however well intentioned – did not achieve its objective. The reforms were there but the engagement was less effective. This time, listening to what Europeans want may represent a better starting point.

The [joint declaration](#) on the Conference of the Future of Europe outlines the themes that the institutions believe will be central to the conversation. This is not a closed list; it is a starting point for a conversation that should develop from the bottom up.

We, the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission, aim to give citizens a say on what matters to them.

Reflecting the Strategic Agenda of the European Council, the 2019-2024 Political Guidelines of the European Commission and the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions will cover, amongst others:

- *Building a healthy continent,*
- *the fight against climate change and environmental challenges,*
- *an economy that works for people,*
- *social fairness,*
- *equality and intergenerational solidarity,*

- *Europe's digital transformation,*
- *European rights and values including the Rule of Law,*
- *migration challenges,*
- *security,*
- *the EU's role in the world,*
- *the Union's democratic foundations, and*
- *how to strengthen democratic processes governing the European Union.*

Discussions can also cover cross-cutting issues related to the EU's ability to deliver on policy priorities, such as better regulation, application of subsidiarity and proportionality, implementation and enforcement of the acquis and transparency.

The scope of the Conference should reflect the areas where the European Union has the competence to act or where European Union action would have been to the benefit of European citizens.

Citizens remain free to raise additional issues that matter to them.

If the [digital platform](#) is a good indication, there is significant interest in areas where scholars at the EUI have been working actively – European democracy, the EU in the world, a stronger economy, climate change, the rule of law, values and rights. The challenge is to find ways to show how research done within the wider community at the EUI can contribute to – and help inform – the conversation.

This kind of listening campaign offers an ideal opportunity to showcase the research done and underway at the European University Institute. The conversation that the Conference will generate will be wide-ranging. Very quickly, though, people will start to focus their attention on those issues they find most important. This gives us an opportunity to show how our research connects to the broad themes raised at the outset of that conversation, how it might inform or inspire new contributions to the debate, how the work we do might add value to conversations that are gaining momentum, and how those conversations might be crystallized into concrete recommendations for meaningful change.

The goal is not to change the work we do at the EUI. Rather, it is to communicate that work to a wider European audience, to show how that work is relevant, and to add our own voice to the wider conversation. This kind of activity is essential to the mission of the EUI in all its various incarnations. Generating meaningful research is why we have such a rich scholarly community in the departments, why we have built out the Schuman Centre to deepen specific areas of expertise and to broaden engagement with the policy community, and why we have launched the School of Transnational Governance as a powerful centre for graduate and executive training.

We propose two different EUI responses to this challenge:

1. The first is to identify and showcase how existing research at EUI connects to the main themes of debate in the wider conference. We have already made a first selection of policy briefs from the last two years but we welcome more input from your side. This requires relatively little effort. All we need is for you to provide the publication details (including the web address) of any recent research you want us to promote within the conversation, together with a short statement (240 characters or less) highlighting the most important insight that publication has to offer. We can fold that information into a Twitter campaign that highlight