

# The Conference on the Future of Europe

The **Conference on the Future of Europe** is a bottom-up exercise allowing European citizens to express their opinion on the Union's future policies and functioning. Tools such as the digital platform and citizens' panels enable discussion of topics that matter to them.



## Multilingual Digital Platform

Multilingual hub for citizens to share and debate ideas

### What it is

- Main hub for citizens to share ideas and send contributions
- Repository of citizens' contributions and documents
- Input from events taking place under the umbrella of the Conference
- Publication of conclusions reached by the Conference

### Conference Charter

Citizens and event organisers must respect the Conference Charter:

- Respect EU values: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights
- Encourage diversity in the debates and respect freedom of speech
- No hate speech or content which is illegal or deliberately false or misleading
- Favour cross-border participation and use of different languages



- Guarantee full transparency, with input from citizens analysed and published on the digital platform
- Webstream or broadcast events whenever possible
- Respect data protection rules and the visual identity of the conference

### Moderation of platform supervised by the Executive Board



## Conference Plenary

433 representatives

Per Member State

### Representatives

European Parliament	108	
National parliaments	108	(4)
European Citizens' Panels	80	
Council	54	(2)
National events and/or panels	27	(1)
Committee of the Regions	18	
Economic and Social Committee	18	
Social partners	8	
Civil society organisations	8	
European Commission	3	
President of the European Youth Forum	1	

### Debates and discusses

The recommendations from the Citizens' Panels  
The input from the multilingual platform

### Work prepared

By 9 thematic working groups

### Puts forward

Proposals to the Executive Board (on a consensual basis)

### Consensus

To be found at least between the European Parliament, Council, Commission, and national parliaments



## European Citizens' Panels

Forums where citizens discuss specific themes and provide a set of recommendations to the Conference plenary for the EU institutions to follow up

Four citizens' panels set up, between them covering the nine topics shown above

### 200 citizens on each panel, selected at random

- At least 1 man and 1 woman per Member State, applying degressive proportionality as in Parliament
- 1/3 should be between 16 and 25 years of age

### Representatives of each panel take part in plenary

- At least 1/3 between 16 and 25 years of age
- To present their recommendations

### Broad representation of citizens

- Geographic origin
- Gender
- Age
- Socioeconomic background
- Level of education



## Executive Board

9 representatives

- 3 from the European Parliament
- 3 from the Council of the EU
- 3 from the European Commission

### Co-Chairs

Guy Verhofstadt (Parliament)  
Ana Paula Zacarias\* (Council)  
Dubravka Šuica (Commission)

**Observers** from the European Parliament, Council, national parliaments, Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, other EU institutions and European social partners

**Decide** on the work of the Conference

**Prepare** the meetings of the plenary

**Report** to the joint presidency on the plenary's conclusions

### Consensus

of the nine representatives

## Joint Presidency

European Parliament	David Maria Sassoli
Council of the EU	António Costa*
European Commission	Ursula von der Leyen

## Common Secretariat

Equal number from the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission

**Ensure** functioning of the Conference, and assist the Executive Board

\*The Council representatives will change with the rotating presidency.

## Further information

### Multilingual Platform

The Conference's [multilingual platform](#) is a hub giving European citizens and European civil society organisations the opportunity to share ideas on the future of Europe, and to host and attend events. It will act as a repository of contributions and documents, and as an interactive tool to share and debate ideas of citizens. The platform is open to citizens, civil society, social partners, other stakeholders, public authorities at EU and national, regional, local level.

### European Citizens' Panels

These are vital bodies of the Conference, tasked with debating issues that matter to citizens. The composition of European citizens' panels ( $\pm$  200 citizens chosen at random) will be transnational and representative of the EU population, not only with respect to gender but also age, socio-economic background, geographic origin and level of education, with  $\frac{1}{3}$  of participants between 16 and 25 years of age. The European citizens' panels will hold debates, including on the basis of contributions from the digital platform, and feed into the discussion of the Conference plenary with recommendations for the EU institutions to follow up. Four thematic citizens' panels are planned: i) European democracy/values, rights, rule of law, security; ii) climate change, environment/health; iii) stronger economy, social justice, jobs/education, youth, culture, sport/digital transformation; and iv) EU in the world/migration.

European citizens' panels will meet in deliberative sessions, in different locations and will be dedicated to specific themes. Member States (at national, regional or local level) and other stakeholders (civil society, social partners or citizens) may organise additional citizens' panels under the umbrella of the Conference, provided they respect the [Conference Charter](#) in full.

### Joint Presidency

The Conference is under the tripartite authority of the Presidents of the European Parliament, Council of the EU and Commission, respectively David Sassoli, António Costa, representing the Portuguese Presidency of the Council until 30 June 2021, and Ursula von der Leyen. Based on the rotation established by [Council Decision](#), the Presidency of the Council will then be held by Slovenia (1 July–31 December 2021) and France (1 January–30 June 2022). The tripartite Presidency of the Conference is the ultimate body to which the final outcome of the Conference will be reported, so that each institution may provide the appropriate follow-up in accordance with their own competences.

### Conference Plenary

The plenary comprises a total of 433 representatives, from the three institutions (Commission, Council of the EU and Parliament), national parliaments, citizens' panels, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), national events or panels, social partners and civil society. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be invited when the international role of the EU is discussed. Other stakeholders and experts may also be invited.

The plenary will discuss issues and recommendations coming from national and European citizens' panels as well as input from the digital platform, grouped by themes. Debates will be open, without a predetermined outcome and without limiting topics to pre-defined policy areas. The plenary decides on a consensual basis (at least between the Parliament, Council, Commission and the national parliaments) on the proposals to be put forward to the Executive Board. The latter is responsible for drafting the final report of the Conference, in full collaboration and in full transparency with the Plenary, which will be published on the digital platform and sent to the Joint Presidency for concrete follow-up.

### Executive Board

The Executive Board manages the work of the conference (plenaries, citizens' panels, and digital platform), oversees all activities, and prepares meetings of the plenary, including input from citizens, and their follow-up. All three institutions (Parliament, Commission and Council) are equally represented in the Executive Board, each with three members and up to four observers. The Executive Board is co-chaired by a representative of each of the three institutions; in the Council's case by the rotating presidency. The presidential troika of [COSAC](#) (the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of EU national parliaments) have permanent observer status. The EESC and CoR also have observer status. The co-chairs can propose the creation of thematic working groups; a group will cover each of the nine topics. The Executive Board may invite experts to participate in events of the Conference.

### Secretariat

A common secretariat composed of equal numbers of staff of the European Parliament, General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission, assists the Executive Board in the organisation of the Conference plenary and the European citizens' panels.

**Sources:** [Joint declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), [the Rules of Procedure of the Conference](#), [Executive Board reports](#).

---

This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy. © European Union, 2021.