



President of the European Parliament
Mr David Maria Sassoli

President of the European Council
Mr Charles Michel

President-in-Office of the Council of the
European Union
Mr Heiko Maas

President of the European Commission
Ms Ursula von der Leyen

Berlin, 30 November 2020

Gunther Krichbaum, MdB
Chairman of the Committee on
European Union Affairs

Deutscher Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin

Guido Wolf
Chairman of the Committee on
European Union Questions

Bundesrat
Leipziger Straße 3-4
11055 Berlin

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mister Presidents,

Your institutions are currently negotiating a Joint Declaration to implement a Conference on the Future of Europe. The declared aim of the inclusive Conference is to make the voices of citizens more audible, to involve them closely in shaping the future of Europe and thus strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU. The Joint Declaration shall define the final concept, structure, subject and timetable of the Conference. In many areas, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the need for a forum for open discussion on the reorientation of the EU even more visible.

COSAC has already discussed the Conference on the Future of Europe project on several occasions and has expressly welcomed the idea. National Parliaments have voiced a clear desire to be appropriately involved in the Conference and its various fora, including the Steering Group, and have reached out to the European institutions vis-à-vis this matter several times. The 34th Bi-annual Report of COSAC now addresses the topic again and provides further insights into questions regarding the participation, the choice of formats and possible content of the Conference.

Consequently, we reaffirm that the national Parliaments should ideally be involved on an equal footing with the European Parliament in the organisation of the Conference, in its steering committee and in drawing up conclusions. For this purpose, COSAC structures could be easily emulated. National Parliaments best represent the composition of the population as



assemblies of directly elected representatives. They will play a key role in implementing the results of the Conference; by communicating these results they are indispensable partners as a direct link to the citizens.

We support a decentralised approach for the Conference with the organisation of several events in the Member States and their regions. The plenary of the Conference should take up the results of these events. Final declarations could then be adopted at events in the Member States to provide impetus for the plenary of the Conference. Digital solutions should be applied when organising these events in light of the pandemic and also to increase the Conference's outreach – video conferences and representative surveys are conceivable, for example. Some physical events should, however, still take place on a smaller scale as far as possible, in order to enhance proximity. Moderated debates, dialogues with citizens and experts or town hall meetings with political representatives and civil society could be suitable for this purpose.

Regarding possible topics of the Conference, we suggest that institutional aspects should be taken up, for instance, with view to the participation of National Parliaments in the EU legislative process, the extension of the subsidiarity check period to 12 weeks. The Conference could also focus on questions related to green transformation and the rule of law. Moreover, it should be able to put topics on the agenda in addition to the thematic framework defined by the Joint Declaration of the European Institutions.

Even though the Conference is not a Convention, its scope should be kept open for all possible outcomes including legislative proposals and, if deemed appropriate, treaty discussions or otherwise.

We call on you to take these aspects into account in your further discussions on the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe, and appeal to you to adopt the Joint Declaration in a timely manner in order to enable the Conference to start as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Gunther Krichbaum

Guido Wolf