

## <u>Informal meeting of Ministers for European Affairs</u> <u>Discussion note on the Conference on the Future of Europe</u>

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the European Council discussed the Final Report of the Conference on the Future of Europe and agreed\_noted\_that the Conference was a unique opportunity for to engage with European citizens to step forward and influence the direction of policy making in the European Union. The European Council also agreed\_stated an effective follow-up to this report is to be ensured by the institutions, each within their own sphere of competences and in accordance with the Treaties, that the report should be implemented by the European institutions according to their competencies and finally, stressed\_and recalled the importance of ensuring that citizens are informed of the follow-up to the proposals made in the report.the importance of informing citizens on how the proposals are being implemented.

The Presidency welcomes the Conclusions of the European Council in this regard as well as the preliminary analysis preparation of analyses of the Conference Proposals in the Communication from the European Commission as well as in the document from nd the General Secretariat of the Council, which were both welcomed by the Council. The Presidency views the Conference as a unique exercise strengthening mutual trust, and direct participation of European citizens in conveying their ideas and hopes for the European project into the hands of the European Parliament, Commission and Council, Commission and Parliament. Together, citizens and European institutions came forward with a total of 49 proposals, which include over 320 related measures recommendations.

The Presidency sees the <u>preliminary</u> analyses <u>prepared by of</u>-both the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council as <u>the starting point</u> the foundational building blocks for any future steps for the Council, as regards the <u>follow-up implementation</u> of the Conference Proposals. The Presidency particularly welcomes the Commission's commitment to include measures identified within the Conference in the legislative programming cycle, including as well the Commission Work Programme for 2023.

The detailed preliminary overview of the proposals prepared by the Commission and by the Council General Secretariat of the Council of the two institutions makes it clear that a vast majority of proposals and related measures either already are either part of current ongoing initiatives, will be are already tabled to be tackled in the coming months, or are already addressed by the EU institutions. Therefore, for a large majority of cases, the proposals and related measures could can be implemented within the current institutional framework of the Union. The Conference Proposals nevertheless also include a subset of very limited number of proposals and specific measures recommendations whose follow-up full implementation—we ould necessitate Treaty change. In this regard, we view the timeframe of the Czech Presidency as the perfect starting point for discussions that cannot be framed solely within the boundaries of one Presidency.

The Czech Presidency plans to hold at least two further discussions on the Conference Proposals <u>aton</u> the GAC level. In addition, in line with the commitment made by the Council component during the



Conference, the Czech Presidency intends to organise a feedback event with the two other institutions. The and to cooperate with the Commission on organizing a follow-up event in Brussels, whose aim will be to showcase to European citizens the work of the EU European institutions on the follow-up implementation of the Conference Proposals.

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With a view to the above, the Czech Presidency would like to take this first possible opportunity and begin discussions on the <u>follow-up\_implementation</u> of the Conference Conclusions at the upcoming informal meeting of Ministers for European Affairs in Prague, building on the work of the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission.

The Czech Presidency stresses that a thorough examination and <u>follow-up implementation</u> of the Conference results means that no proposal of the Conference is off the table and institutions should be ready for a frank exchange of views even on proposals that may be deemed controversial. For that reason, the Presidency would like to open the discussion with an informal exchange on a cross-cutting series of measures that have not yet been tackled, as well as those where formal discussions are to take place in the coming months:

-Ministers are invited to give their initial opinions on:

- 1.) Would the Council be ready to examine the use of the *passerelle* clauses (see ANNEX) for a change from unanimity voting towards qualified majority voting and, if so, in which areas? Areas where a change of unanimity voting towards qualified majority voting could be envisaged in order to create a Union that is more flexible in the face of the challenges of today,
- 2.) <u>How can Broadening</u> opportunities for participatory democracy <u>be broadened to give citizens</u> greater voice, e.g. elements inspired by the Conference? <u>including e.g. elements inspired by the Conference which could serve to give Citizens greater voice</u>,
- 3.) Possibilities to reform and make more efficient enlargement/accession process in order to fully use its potential as one of the most powerful geopolitical instruments.
- **4.)** Priority proposals for deepening of sectoral cooperation in the EUWhich measures could be implemented by the Council, without the other institutions, and work could already start?

Following this informal exchange, the Presidency will distribute a questionnaire providing the Member States with an opportunity to further elaborate in writing on these and other topics.

Both the exchange and the written comments will serve to guide the Presidency in discussions on the <u>follow-up implementation</u> of the Conference results during the second half of the year.





## Annex: Legal bases with unanimity for which a passerelle could be used to switch to OMV

The general passerelle in Article 48(7), 1st subp., TEU¹ empowers the European Council, acting by unanimity and with the EP consent, to switch legal bases in the TFEU or in CFSP (except in military/defence) from unanimity in the Council to QMV, provided no national parliament opposes the activation of the passerelle within 6 months.

This general passerelle may be applied to any of the 67 provisions in the table below. Although, formally, that passerelle may apply to any of the provisions below - including those which are themselves (specific) passerelles clauses or sectoral simplified revision clauses (shown in bold the table) - switching to QMV the three provisions in this list which condition their use to an approval by the 27 Member States in accordance with their constitutional rules - i.e. Article 25 (extending citizens rights), 223 (electoral law for MEPs) and 262 TFEU (extending ECJ powers to IP) (shown in italics in the table) - could be considered as contradictory.

Moreover, the Treaties also contain six specific *passerelles* which empower the European Council or the Council, acting by unanimity, to switch the relevant legal basis from unanimity to QMV (also shown in the table below).

Subject matter Type of act and procedure **Article** Legal acts by the Council General voting rule for Council decisions in CFSP - decision 24(1). subp. Submitted to a specific passerelle: Art. 31(3) TEU + 31(1) TEU - HR proposal or initiative from a empowers the European Council to enlarge the list of QMV Member State cases in Art. 31(2) (except military/defence) - decision - HR proposal Establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS 27(3) T Specific passerelle (see above) - EP consultation - Commission consent - decision Actions to be undertaken by the EU in CFSP **28 TEU** - HR proposal or initiative from a Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence) Member State Positions to be taken by the EU in CFSP **29 TEU** - HR proposal or initiative from a Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence) Member State - decision (signature and conclusion) TEU International agreements in the area of CFSP (+ Art. 218(8) TFEU) **Specific** *passerelle* (see above) (except military/defence) - HR proposal

Article 48(7), 2nd subp., TEU also contains a general *passerelle* empowering, under the same procedure, the European Council to switch a legal basis in the TFEU from the special legislative procedure to the ordinary legislative procedure (and therefore also to QMV in the Council, where that was not already the case).



20.	N	7
39 TEU	Personal data protection (processing and free movement of data by Member States when carrying out CFSP activities)  Specific passerelle (see above)	- decision - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State
41(2), 1st subp., TEU	Deciding not to charge a CFSP operating expenditure to the EU budget  Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence)	- decision - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State
41(2). 2nd subp., 1st sentence, TEU	Deciding to charge a CFSP expenditure to Member States according to another key than GNP  Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence)	- decision - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State
41(3) TEU	Specific procedures for guaranteeing rapid access to appropriations in EU budget for urgent financing of CFSP initiatives  Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence)	- decision  - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State  - EP consultation
42(4) and 43 TEU	ESDP missions Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence)	- decision - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State
44 TEU	Entrusting an ESDP task to a group of willing Member States  Specific passerelle (see above) (except military/defence)	- decision - HR proposal or initiative from a Member State
19(1) TFEU_	Measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consent
21(3) TFEU	Social security or social protection measures necessary for attaining objective of free movement of EU citizens	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
22(2) TFEU	Arrangements for exercising the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections and EP elections in the Member State of residence without being a national of that State	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
25, 2nd para. TFEU <sup>2</sup>	Strengthening or adding to the rights for EU citizens [this is a sectoral simplified revision clause]	- provisions (special legislative procedure)  - EP consent  - approval by the Member States in accordance with their constitutional requirements <sup>3</sup>

This is a simplified revision clause allowing the Council to add to a Treaty provision.



20 20 3	W	
64(3) TFEU	Step backwards in EU law as regards liberalisation of movement of capital to or from third countries	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
65(4) TFEU	Decision on compatibility with the Treaties of a restrictive national tax measure concerning third countries	- decision - application by the Member State concerned
77(3) TFEU	Measures on passports, ID cards, residence permits, etc. (on their format)	- decision (special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
81(3) 1st subp., TFEU	Measures concerning family law with cross-border implications  Submitted to a specific passerelle: see below, Art. 81(3), 2nd and 3rd subp., TFEU	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
81(3), 2nd and 3rd subp., TFEU <sup>4</sup>	Deciding to switch to certain family law aspects with cross-border implications to codecision  [this is a specific passerelle]	- decision - Commission proposal - EP consultation - non-opposition of national parliaments within 6 months
82(2)(d) TFEU <sup>5</sup>	Extending the list of specific aspects of criminal procedure in para. 2  [this is a sectoral simplified revision clause]	- decision - EP consent
83(1), 3rd subp., TFEU <sup>6</sup>	Extending the list of "euro crimes" in para. 1, 2nd subp.  [this is a sectoral simplified revision clause]	- decision - Commission proposal (Art. 76) - EP consent
86(1) TFEU	Establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office	- regulation (special legislative procedure) <sup>7</sup> - EP consent
87(3) TFEU	Operational police cooperation	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure)8
89 TFEU	Conditions and limitations under which the competent authorities of the Member States may operate in the territory of another Member State	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation

This means in practice that even if the voting rule for the Council decision would be changed to QMV, there would still be the requirement of approval by all Member States in national procedures.

This is a specific *passerelle* which allows the Council to decide to switch from unanimity to QMV.

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Coupled with an 'accelerator' procedure in the 2nd and 3rd subpara.

<sup>8</sup> Coupled with an 'accelerator' mechanism.



92 TFEU	Derogation from the standstill obligation of non- discrimination based on nationality in the field of transport	- measure (any legal act)
108(2), 3rd subp., TFEU	Compatibility with the internal market of an aid granted by a Member State or through state resources (derogation from Art. 107 TFEU or from regulations based thereon)	- decision - application by a Member State
<u>113 TFEU</u>	Harmonisation of legislation concerning turnover taxes, excise duties and other forms of indirect taxes	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation - EESC consultation
115 TFEU	Approximation of legislation which directly affects the establishment or functioning of the internal market (including direct taxation) (in cases other than covered by Art. 114 TFEU)	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation - EESC consultation
118, 2nd subp., TFEU	Language arrangements for the European intellectual property rights	- regulation (special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
126(14), 2nd subp., TFEU <sup>9</sup>	Modification/replacement of the Protocol on the excessive deficit procedure  [this is a sectoral simplified revision clause]	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP and ECB consultation
127(6) TFEU	Specific tasks for the ECB concerning policies relating to prudential supervision	- regulation (special legislative procedure) - EP and ECB consultation
140(3) TFEU	Fixing of the rate at which the euro is to be substituted for the currency of the Member State(s) concerned	- measure (any legal act)  - with the agreement of the Council member representing the Member State(s) concerned  - Commission proposal  - ECB consultation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This is a simplified revision clause allowing the Council to modify Treaty provisions.



153(1)(c), (d), (f) and (g) + 153(2), 3rd subp., TFEU	Social policy: - social security and social protection of workers; (c) - protection of workers where their employment contract is terminated; (d) - representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers, including co-determination; (f) - conditions of employment for third-country nationals legally residing in Union territory; (g) Submitted to a specific passerelle for points (d), (f) and (g): see below, Art. 153(2), 4th subp., TFEU	- directives and encouragement measures (special legislative procedure) - EP consultation - EESC and CoR consultation
153(2), 4th subp., TFEU <sup>10</sup>	Social policy – switching to codecision the 3 points below:  - protection of workers where their employment contract is terminated (d):  - representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers, including co-determination (f);  - conditions of employment for third-country nationals legally residing in Union territory (g)  [this is a specific passerelle]  Implementation of agreements between management and	- decision - Commission proposal - EP consultation  - measure - request of the signatory parties
155(2), 2nd subp., TFEU	labour in the fields of Art. 153(2) where unanimity is required	- Commission proposal - information of EP
192(2), 1 <sup>st</sup> subp., TFEU	Environment: - provisions primarily of a fiscal nature; (a)  - measures affecting town and country planning, quantitative management of water; land use; (b)  - measures significantly affecting a Member State's choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its energy supply; (c)  Submitted to a specific passerelle: see below Art. 192(2), 2nd subp., TFEU	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure) - EP consultation - EESC and CoR consultation
192(2), 2nd subp., TFEU <sup>11</sup>	Environment - switching to codecision in matters mentioned in Art. 192(2), 1st subp., TFEU  [this is a specific passerelle]	- decision - Commission proposal - EP consultation - EESC and CoR consultation

This is a specific *passerelle* which allows the Council to decide to switch from a special legislative procedure with unanimity to codecision with QMV.

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194(3) TFEU	Measures in the field of energy policy which are primarily of fiscal nature	- regulation (special legislative procedure) - EP consultation
203 TFEU <sup>12</sup>	Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories (listed in Annex II to the Treaties)	- measure (any legal act, special legislative procedure or not)  - Commission proposal  - EP consultation if special legislative procedure
207(4), 2nd and 3rd subp., TFEU	Common commercial policy - exceptions to QMV for agreements on: - trade in services; commercial aspects of intellectual property and foreign direct investment, when unanimity is required for the adoption of an internal EU act; - trade in cultural and audiovisual services, where these agreements risk prejudicing the Union's cultural and linguistic diversity; - trade in social, education and health services, where these agreements risk seriously disturbing the national organisation of such services and prejudicing the responsibility of Member States to deliver them	- decision (signature and conclusion)  - EP consent if agreement covers fields to which codecision applies or in which the Council adopts legislative acts with the EP consent  - EP consultation in other cases
218(8), 2nd subp., TFEU	Voting rule on international agreements: -covering a field for which unanimity is required for the adoption of an internal EU act; -association agreements (Art. 8 TEU and 217 TFEU); -agreements on economic and financial cooperation (Art. 212 TFEU) with candidates for accession; -EU accession to the ECHR (Art. 6(2) TEU)	- decision (signature and conclusion)  - EP consent if association agreement or if covers fields to which codecision applies or in which the Council adopts legislative acts with the EP consent  - EP consultation in other cases
219(1) TFEU	Agreements on an exchange-rate system for the euro in relation with third States' currencies as well as adoption, adjustment or abandonment of central rates of the euro with exchange-rate systems	- decision - recommendation from ECB or - Commission recommendation + ECB consultation - EP consultation
223(1), 2nd subp., TFEU	Measures for the election of MEPs by direct universal suffrage	- measures (special legislative procedure)  - on initiative from, and after obtaining the consent of, the EP  - approval by the Member States in accordance with their constitutional requirements <sup>13</sup>

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 12}$   $\,$  Where the special legislative procedure, with unanimity, applies.

This means in practice that even if the voting rule for the Council decision would be changed to QMV, there would still be the requirement of approval by all Member States in national procedures.



		- EP regulation (special legislative
223(2), 2nd sentence, TFEU	Rules or conditions relating to the taxation of MEPs or former MEPs	procedure) - on EP initiative - Commission opinion - Council consent
246, 3rd subp TFEU	Choice not to replace a Commissioner in case of a vacancy resulting from death, resignation or compulsory retirement	- decision - proposal from the President of the Commission
252, 1st subp., TFEU	Increasing the number of Advocates-General	- decision - request from the Court
257, 4th subp., TFEU	Appointment of the members of the specialised courts	- decision
262 TFEU	Conferring jurisdiction on the EU Court of Justice in disputes relating to the application of EU acts creating European intellectual property rights	- measures (special legislative procedure)  - EP consultation  - approval by the Member States in accordance with their constitutional requirements <sup>14</sup>
293(1) TFEU	Amending a Commission proposal (against the will of the Commission)	- adoption of the measure proposed
294(9) TFEU	Amending a Commission proposal, during the first or second reading of codecision, where the Commission has delivered a negative opinion on such amendments	- adoption of the measure proposed
301, 2nd subp., TFEU	Composition of the Economic and Social Committee	- decision - proposal from the Commission
305, 2nd subp., TFEU	Composition of the Committee of the Regions	- decision - proposal from the Commission
308, 3rd subp., TFEU <sup>15</sup>	Modification of the EIB Statute [this is a sectoral simplified revision clause]	- decision (special legislative procedure)  - request from EIB + consultation of Commission and EP; or  - proposal from Commission + consultation of EIB and EP

This means in practice that even if the voting rule for the Council decision would be changed to QMV, there would still be the requirement of approval by all Member States in national procedures.

This is a simplified revision clause allowing the Council to modify Treaty provisions.



312(2), 1st subp., TFEU	Multiannual financial framework  Submitted to a specific passerelle: the European Council is empowered to decide by unanimity to authorise the Council to switch to QMV for adopting the MFF	- regulation (special legislative procedure)  - EP consent, which shall be given by a majority of its component members
329(2), 2nd subp., TFEU (+ 20(2) TEU)	Authorisation to proceed with enhanced cooperation in CFSP (except military/defence)	- decision  - request of the Member States concerned (at least 9)  - HR and Commission consultation  - EP information
331(2), 3rd subp., TFEU	Acceptance of the participation of a Member State in an existing enhanced cooperation in CFSP (except military/defence)	- decision - request from the Member State concerned - HR consultation/HR proposal if transitional measures
332 TFEU	Deciding to charge expenditure resulting from the implementation of enhanced cooperation differently (than charging it on participating Member States)	- decision - EP consultation
333(1) TFEU <sup>16</sup>	Deciding to switch to QMV within an enhanced cooperation (except military/defence)  [this is a specific passerelle]	- decision
333(2) TFEU <sup>17</sup>	Deciding to switch to codecision within an enhanced cooperation (except military/defence)  [this is a specific passerelle]	- decision - EP consultation
342 TFEU	Rules governing the language regime of the EU's institutions	- regulation
346(2) TFEU	Changes to the list of arms, munitions and war material	- decision - Commission proposal
Art. 64, CJEU Protocol (No 3)	The rules governing the language arrangements applicable at the ECJ	- regulation  - at the request of the ECJ and after consultation of the COM and EP; or  - on proposal from the COM, after consultation of the ECJ and EP

This is a specific *passerelle* which allows the Council to decide to switch from unanimity to QMV, within the enhanced cooperation.

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Art. 6, convergence criteria Protocol (No 13)	Laying down the details of the convergence criteria referred to in Article 140(1) TFEU replacing Protocol (No 13)	- decision  - proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, the ECB and the Economic and Financial Committee
Art. 4, Schengen Protocol (No 19)	Participation of Ireland to take part in some or all of the provisions of the Schengen acquis	- decision  - upon request from Ireland and with its agreement
Art. 6, Schengen Protocol (No 19) (+ Art. 218 TFEU)	Schengen acquis - Association of Iceland and Norway  Agreement with Iceland and Norway for the establishment of rights and obligations between Ireland on the one hand, and Iceland and Norway on the other, in domains of the Schengen acquis which apply to these States	- decision (signature and conclusion) - Commission proposal - EP consent
Art. 5, JHA Protocol (No 21)	Deciding on the participation of Ireland to the non-administrative costs of a JHA measure by which it is not bound	- decision - EP consultation