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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0235/2022**

2.5.2022

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the follow-up to the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe  
(2022/2648(RSP))

**Gerolf Annemans, Gunnar Beck, Hélène Laporte, Christine Anderson,  
Mara Bizzotto, Susanna Ceccardi, Roman Haider, Peter Kofod, Jaak  
Madison, Philippe Olivier, Alessandro Panza, Bernhard Zimniok, Thierry  
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on behalf of the ID Group

**European Parliament resolution on the follow-up to the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe (2022/2648(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Conference’s Rules of Procedure, as approved by the Executive Board and published on the Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the nine thematic working groups of the Conference on the Future of Europe,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the nine thematic working groups of the Conference on the Future of Europe, as endorsed on 30 April 2022 by a majority in the Conference plenary,
  - having regard to the activity report of the Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe, published in February 2022,
  - having regard to the contributions per Member State on the Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe, published in February 2022,
  - having regard to the reports of national citizen’s panels and national events, as published on the Multilingual Digital Platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe,
  - having regard to the ‘Youth Ideas report for the Conference on the Future of Europe’ published as a result of the European Youth Event of 8/9 October 2021,
  - having regard to the recommendations of European Citizens’ Panel 1 ‘Stronger economy, social justice and jobs / Education, culture, youth and sport / Digital transformation’,
  - having regard to the recommendations of European Citizens’ Panel 2 ‘European democracy/Values and rights, rule of law, security’,
  - having regard to the recommendations of European Citizens’ Panel 3 ‘Climate change, environment/Health’,
  - having regard to the recommendations of European Citizens’ Panel 4 ‘EU in the world/Migration’,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Conference on the Future of Europe failed from the outset to offer a real opportunity to open a frank dialogue with citizens at the end of a decade marked by multiple crises (Euro crisis, migration crisis, Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic) and

which has seen a steady increase in scepticism towards the European Union, unable to respond to the challenges of this historical era and the real needs of society;

- B. whereas the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation occurred during the final period of the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- C. whereas the Conference on the Future of Europe was an idea of the President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron, and it is now coming to an end during the French Presidency of the Council; whereas the Conference's timeframe was purposely reduced from two years to one , resulting in chaotic organisation;
- D. whereas the Conference was attended by citizens, Members of the European Parliament, European Commissioners, representatives of the Council, members of national parliaments, representatives of the social partners and organised civil society, members of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions;
- E. whereas the selection process for the citizens who took part in the Conference on the Future of Europe lacked transparency; whereas the selection of citizens, characterised by what is known as self-selection bias, did not fully guarantee a diversity of visions on the European Union; whereas a list of participants in order to know their identity has never been published;
- F. whereas, in order to fully understand and address the shortcomings of the European Union project, as well as to respond to the real needs of society and be ready for the challenges ahead, including in light of current and historical events, it would have been fundamental to listen to citizens presenting a critical point of view;
- G. whereas the Conference received very little attention from national media, remaining unknown to many;
- H. whereas the number of participating citizens compared to the entire European population was a very low percentage, only 0.00001 %;
- I. whereas the Multilingual Digital Platform, according to the Kantar activity report of March 2022, recorded a modest total of 43 734 contributions and 16 274 ideas;
- J. whereas the costs (the sources and amount of funding required for the Conference) have not yet been made public, despite several requests by Members of Parliament's Conference Delegation directed to the Executive Board and parliamentary questions under Rule 138 to the Commission and to the Council;
- K. whereas the Rules of Procedure were only agreed on in general terms by the Executive Board; whereas, as a consequence, the procedures to be followed in the working groups of the Conference on the Future of Europe were based on wide discretion of the Chairs or on solutions drawn up by the Executive Board, often at a very late stage, and without any transparency or previous agreement with the participants in the Conference;
- L. whereas the selection of the experts who guided the work of the European Citizens' Panels was carried out exclusively by the Executive Board; whereas this process was

also characterised by a total lack of transparency; whereas, according to publicly available data, many of these experts received, or are still receiving, funding from the EU;

- M. whereas the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe was drafted on the basis of non-paper drawn up by the working groups of the Conference, based on the recommendations received from the European Citizens' Panels, the national citizens' panels and a small part of the recommendations gathered on the Multilingual Digital Platform;
- N. whereas, in the process of drafting the non-paper on the basis of recommendations received from citizens, proposals from the other components of the Conference, in particular from Members of the European Parliament, were also included;
- O. whereas many of the proposals were often contained in parliamentary resolutions, including, among others, the proposed abolition of the unanimity voting mechanism in the Council, the amendment of European electoral law to introduce transnational lists and an EU-wide-constituency, the extension of the scope of the Conditionality Regulation 2020/2092 to all rule of law violations, and enhancing the European Health Union, as well as proposals on migration which mostly mirror those contained in the Commission's 2021 Migration Pact;
- P. whereas the Conference on the Future of Europe has been used as a smokescreen to force through fundamental policy changes, to the detriment of the sovereignty of the Member States;
- Q. whereas the views and proposals of minorities, i.e. views that differ from those advocating deeper European integration and the establishment of a federal Union between Member States, were not adequately represented in the Conference conclusions, including the contributions on the Multilingual Platform, some of which endorsed sceptical views on the European Union project too;
- R. whereas several of the proposals endorsed by the majority of the Conference require a change in the Treaties; whereas conclusions endorsed by the Conference include a call for the launch of a convention under Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to amend the Treaties;

#### ***Critical observations on the process as a whole***

1. Condemns the process the Conference on the Future of Europe as a whole and its conclusions; considers the Conference as neither democratic, legitimate nor transparent and denounces its conclusions as pre-written and politically oriented; points out that 'Conference on the Future of Europe' is a misnomer as it did not deal with Europe, i.e. the European continent, but with the EU's future as a political and institutional structure currently failing to respond to upcoming challenges; stresses that from the start, the organisers did not seek to generate a genuine debate on Europe but to steer a consultation on the future of the EU by exploring only federalist opinions;
2. Observes that the Conference failed to offer a good opportunity to European institutions to have a fruitful and comprehensive dialogue with citizens, national parliaments,

regional and local authorities, social partners and organised civil society on the future of Europe;

3. Highlights that the Conference on the Future of Europe did not respond to the need to bring citizens closer to the European institutions or to act as a new democratic means of participation, and that such an exercise should therefore not be repeated; stresses in fact that free debate with citizens was not favoured, due to the control exercised over the entire process by the political component of the Conference, undermining its full democratic nature;
4. Notes that the Conference received very little attention from national media outlets, resulting in the vast majority of citizens remaining completely unaware of its existence;

#### ***The selection and participation of citizens***

5. Points out that the process of selecting the citizens who participated in the Conference on the Future of Europe was opaque and unclear; notes that the number of participating citizens, compared to the entire European population, represented a very low percentage, therefore far to be considered 'representative'; stresses that only 800 citizens took part in the European Panels and, thereafter, only a few representatives of each panel took part in the Plenary and in the working groups; deeply deplores the fact that a comprehensive list of all participants has never been published;
6. Highlights that not all the visions of Europe and different opinions were represented in the Conference; regrets that a diversity of views on the European Union among the citizens selected was not encouraged and fostered, in particular leaving underrepresented those Europeans who are more sceptical and critical of European policies; strongly affirms that listening to citizens presenting a critical point of view would have been fundamental for EU institutions;
7. Notes that many of the proposals, in particular those expressing a critical view of the EU, were not included in the final draft of the conclusions reached; points out that only very few of the Platform's contributions were taken into account by the working groups, despite the fact that the Multilingual Digital Platform had a much higher level of participation than the European and national citizens panels;

#### ***Lack of financial transparency and accountability***

8. Highlights that the costs of the Conference have not yet been made public, despite numerous requests from Members of the European Parliament;
9. Strongly condemns this lack of transparency in the use of public funds, especially at a time of historic economic slowdown, and criticises that the Commission has constantly refused to answer parliamentary questions on this matter, notably questions for written answer E-001181/2022 and E-002268/2021;
10. Calls therefore on the European Court of Auditors to investigate and report the lack of transparency and budget planning for this event;

#### ***Procedural problems and lack of transparency in the decision-making process***

11. Deeply regrets and condemns the lack of transparency of the procedures governing the Conference decision-making process;
12. Recalls that the management of the Conference was entrusted to the external company Kantar; points out that Kantar is a long-standing service provider to the Commission; questions the culture of outsourcing and believes that this process had to be managed, in full transparency, directly by the organising institutions;
13. Notes that the Conference's rules of procedure were only defined in general terms; points out that this led to great confusion for all the components of the Conference, including the citizens involved, who found themselves proceeding step by step, with solutions often approved at a late stage by the Executive Board without any kind of prior agreement between the components;
14. Condemns the total lack of transparency on the selection, exclusively made by the Executive Board, of the experts who guided the work of the European Citizens' Panels; underlines that many of these experts receive, or had received, funding from the EU, according to publicly available data, or were even previously on electoral rolls, resulting in a lack of impartiality;
15. Recalls that the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe was drawn up on the basis of a non-paper drafted by the Conference Working Groups, based on recommendations received from European and national citizens' panels, as well as a small number of recommendations collected on the Multilingual Digital Platform; notes that controversial proposals from other components of the Conference, not even related to citizens' recommendations, in particular from Members of the European Parliament, were also included in the process of drafting the non-paper;
16. Stresses that the Working Groups did not have any rules of procedure approved or available to them indicating how they should proceed in order to reach approval of the proposals; condemns the fact that this was exploited to speed up the process of drafting the proposals, with procedures decided on a discretionary basis by the Chairs of the Working Groups; condemns the fact that the definition of the contents of the non-papers and their approvals took place in a rushed manner, further compromising transparency and dialogue between the institutions and participating citizens;
17. Further regrets the continued involvement of professional politicians, who have strongly influenced and controlled the debate and the entire process;

#### ***The package of proposals endorsed***

18. Rejects those conclusions reflecting controversial issues on which Parliament's view is not unanimous; observes that several proposals require Treaty change; takes note of the fact that 80 % of the recommendations imply a further transfer of national competences to the EU institutions and, therefore, less autonomy of national parliaments and governments on domestic policies;
19. Highlights that minority views and proposals, i.e. views that differ from those advocating deeper European integration and the establishment of a federal Union between Member States, were not adequately represented or incorporated in the

Conference conclusions, also with regard to the contributions on the Multilingual Platform, which also included sceptical views on the European Union project but which never formed part of the discussions or conclusions;

20. Firmly rejects, among other proposals, the proposal of deciding by way of a qualified majority issues that are currently decided by way of unanimity in the Council, in particular in the area of the common foreign and security policy; considers in fact that the unanimity voting method represents an important safeguard for the sovereignty of Member States and for the protection of the interests of their citizens; notes however, that a change to the voting methods for common foreign and security policy in particular is not necessary, as Member States have proved that it is possible to act with unity when it is in the interests of all, as the Ukraine crisis has demonstrated;
21. Utterly deplores and condemns the fact that the majority of the European Parliament component instrumentalised the crisis in Ukraine ('the Kyiv moment') and the dramatic historical moment to justify far-reaching Treaty changes;
22. Criticises the idea of enhancing the European Health Union using the full potential of the current framework and including health and healthcare among the shared competencies between the EU and its Member States; believes that the way the EU has handled the pandemic, particularly with the bad management of the vaccines contract, has shown how necessary it is for these competences to remain firmly in the hands of the Member States;
23. Believes that 'applying and evaluating the scope of the Conditionality Regulation and other rule of law instruments, and considering extensions to new areas regardless of their relevance for the EU budget', as proposed in the final Conference report, would be a mistake;
24. Strongly disagrees with implementing, among other proposals, proposals on migration which do not ensure and safeguard the interests of the Member States and their citizens; notes that the proposals on migration mostly mirror those contained in the Commission's 2021 Migration Pact;
25. Draws explicit attention, with regard to the introduction in the new European electoral law of transnational lists and of a Union-wide constituency, to the consequent risk of a democratic deficit in the European Parliament; expresses its criticism of the application of the principle of digressive proportionality, which distorts the distribution of seats according to the election results in the Member States and is detrimental to the representativeness of the Member States; stresses how this proposal came from the European Parliament component, despite criticisms within the relevant Working Group, including from the participating citizens; stresses, furthermore, that the recommendation to set the voting age at 16 was not agreed by the citizens in the Working Group, but still remains in the official conclusions;
26. Deeply believes that the European Union must respect the role of the Member States, observing the principle of proportionality and subsidiarity at the heart of its policies; welcomes in this sense the proposal for improving the involvement of national and regional parliaments in the EU legislative process and enhancing their roles;



27. Calls for more transparency and accountability in the EU decision-making process; calls for the safeguarding of free speech and media independence, in particular on big tech platforms;
28. Underlines that deeper European integration is not the answer to better face the challenges of the future;

### ***Conclusions on the Conference on the Future of Europe***

29. Notes that, in the conclusions endorsed by the Conference, a call for the launch of a Convention under Article 48 TEU to amend the Treaties is envisaged; recalls that the spokesperson for the European Parliament component, as well as Co-Chair of the Conference and member of the Executive Board, Guy Verhofstadt, during the conclusive plenary session of the Conference on 29 and 30 April 2022, announced the European Parliament's approval of the package of proposals, promising efforts to reach a rapid launch of the Convention; deems that the Conference cannot be considered as a legitimate starting point of any such Convention;
30. Expresses, in this regard, its regret that the Conference on the Future of Europe risks turning into a tool for circumventing parliamentary and representative democracy mechanisms; notes that proposals not in line with and not based on citizens' recommendations were also approved at the initiative of the other components of the Conference, in particular the European Parliament;
31. Strongly questions the democratic legitimacy of the package of proposals, which was endorsed by a small number of citizens and an equally small number of representatives of the European and national institutions, without a real legitimate mandate to do so;
32. Believes that the participation and prior involvement of citizens has an importance, as their ideas and proposals can form a basis for future political decisions to be taken by their elected representatives; stresses that representative democracy is the foundation of European democracy and must be kept distinct from participatory democracy; recalls that with elections people already get a clear say on Europe;
33. Considers that any change to the current EU structure and functioning must be done in accordance with democratic mechanisms and, in any case, within the framework of the Treaties and without asking for their reform; regrets the exclusion of any possibility to transfer more competences to the Member States;
34. Believes, moreover, that any relevant change to the Treaties should be subject to national referendums in accordance with national legislative procedures;
35. Deplores, in conclusion, the fact that the EU institutions have once again missed the opportunity to truly confront the shortcomings of the European project and bring the EU closer to the citizens;
36. Reaffirms that the Conference on the Future of Europe could have been fruitful by listening to critical views on the EU project; considers that the Conference was not a fruitful exercise of democracy and engagement with citizens, having mostly involved those voices in favour of greater European integration, with the result that we did not



have a full democratic process;

37. Invites citizens of the Member States to make use of the existing possibilities to complain to their national ombudsmen and the European Ombudsman in order to force the institutions that organised the Conference to comply with the standards of transparency and legitimacy;

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38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution as well as the annexed proposal to the European Council, the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.