

Draft opinion on the Conference on the Future of Europe

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on budgetary capacity for the euro area,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the future of Europe;
 - having regard to the statement by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, on 23 February 2018, as regards transnational lists, will come back to this issue in the future, with a view to the 2024 elections¹; having regard to the Meseberg declaration by the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, and the chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, of 19 June 2018 to put in place transnational lists for European elections as of 2024²;
 - having regard to Rule 132 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament as modified in July 2019 which, in its Annex VI, Point 18, establishes AFCO exclusive competence for all matters related to the institutional aspects of the European integration process;
 - B. whereas a commitment to integrate the institutional ideas of the above mentioned reports is of utmost importance for the European Parliament;
 - C. whereas the President-elect of the European Commission proposed in her political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 a Conference on the Future of Europe in order to give a say to the citizens; whereas the role of the European Parliament in the preparation of the scope and objectives of the Conference is clearly recalled, and the position of Chair of the Conference belonging to a member of the European Parliament is well-stated;
 - D. whereas the Conference on the Future of Europe will certainly have an impact in every policy of the Union and encompass a broad variety of topics; whereas the Parliamentary Committees in the Parliament have an expertise and shall be consulted during the work of the Conference in their respective fields;
 - E. whereas the timeframe proposed by President-elect of the European Commission would entail the start of the Conference in early 2020 and the delivery of its first results on a new push for European democracy by the summer of 2020 by coming forward with proposals improving the lead candidate system and addressing the issue of transnational lists in view of the next 2024 European elections;
 - F. whereas there is a need to tackle new societal and transnational challenges, as identified by the President-Elect of the European Commission in her Six Priorities, and not entirely foreseen at the time of the Lisbon Treaty;

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2018/02/23>

² <https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/archiv-de/meta/startseite/meseberg-declaration-1140806>

- G. whereas this Conference is an occasion to integrate the citizens into a process leading to propose the concrete institutional and constitutional reforms the European Union has to undertake in order to be more democratic, more efficient, more transparent and foster a Union closer to its citizens;
- H. whereas the Conference should be inspired by the “ever closer union” principle;
1. Welcomes the proposal for a Conference on the Future of Europe and believes that, ten years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, it is high time to give European citizens the opportunity to debate and build together the future of the European Union they want to live in;
 2. Stresses the fact that the Conference must go beyond an inter-institutional discussion; believes that there should be an inclusive approach based on age, gender and geographically balanced participation in different pillars, of Members of the European Parliament, Members of national Parliaments, the European Commission, the Council, civil society, social partners and citizens;
 3. Considers that the Committee of Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee as well as all levels of governance should be included in this process;
 4. Believes that citizens participation to the conference should be organised in a way that respects representativity in order to ensure that the diversity of our societies is fully represented; Believes that consultations should be organised using the most efficient, innovative and appropriate platforms in order to guarantee that any citizen can have a say during the work of the Conference;
 5. Is of the opinion that the Conference, whose concept, structure, timing and scope should be decided by European Parliament, the Commission and the Council in an inter-institutional agreement, shall be mandated to cover a wide range of topics that are of major importance for the future of Europe and core matters of concerns for EU citizens;
 6. Takes note of the creation of a governance working group by the Conference of Presidents in the European Parliament which aim is to define the Parliament priorities and objectives for the Conference and stresses that the outcome of this work should be endorsed by the Parliament in a resolution to guarantee a broad support among the House;
 7. Considers, therefore, that at least the following topics should be discussed in the framework of the Conference: European values, fundamental rights and freedoms, the democratic and institutional aspects of the European integration, environmental challenges and climate crisis, social justice and equality, economic issues including taxation, digital transformation, security and the role of the EU in the world;
 8. Believes that, in order to prepare well in advance the next European elections in 2024, the work on improving the lead candidate system and on the issue of transnational lists should take place during the first six months of the Conference;
 9. Considers that the size of the Conference should be decided in order to ensure a broad participation and representativity while at the same time guaranteeing the efficiency of its work; considers that the Conference could include setting up of thematic committees and plenary sittings and meetings regular enough to deliver concrete proposals;
 10. Offers to host the Conference in the premises of the European Parliament; activities of the conference should also take place in all Member states including outside of capitals; commits to ensure transparency of its work by web-streaming meetings and by publication of all relevant

documents the latest after their debate in the conference or its bodies; offers own staff to support the conference, its committees and pillars;

11. Believes that the credibility of the Conference and its political legitimacy derives from its capacity to go beyond a mere listening or dialogue exercise and to initiate real change;
12. Proposes to insert into the IIA that the three EU Institutions commit to a genuine follow-up of the Conference, with legislative proposals, initiating treaty change or otherwise;
13. Commits itself, if the Conference adopts by a clear majority a proposal to change the EU treaties, to initiate a revision of the Treaties as foreseen in Article 48 (TEU);
14. Calls on a general commitment from all participants to the Conference to ensure, according to their respective competence and role, a proper follow-up of its outcome at their level;
15. Commits itself to propose without delay to the Commission and to the Council a draft inter-institutional agreement based on this resolution;