Resolution on the European Parliament’s position on the Conference on the Future of Europe

2019/2990(RSP) - 15/01/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 494 votes to 147, with 49 abstentions a resolution on the European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

Parliament welcomed the proposal for a Conference on the Future of Europe and believes that it is an appropriate time to give EU citizens a renewed opportunity to have a thorough debate on the future of Europe with a view to shaping the Union in which they want to live together. The Conference should last two years and its work should preferably start on Europe Day, 9 May 2020 (the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration) and be completed by summer 2022.

Objectives and framework of the Conference

Members believe that the Conference is an opportunity to identify what the EU does well and what new measures it needs to do better, to increase its capacity to act and to make it more democratic. Its aim should be to adopt a bottom-up approach to engage directly with citizens in a meaningful dialogue with a view to achieving a permanent mechanism for dialogue with citizens in the long term.

The launch of the Conference process should be preceded by a listening phase to allow citizens from across the European Union to express their ideas, make suggestions and present their own vision of what Europe means to them. Citizens' participation in the conference should be organised in a way that reflects the diversity of our societies using the most innovative platforms, including online tools, and should reach out to all regions of the EU.

Parliament proposed that the Conference Plenary should be the opportunity to launch an open forum for discussion between the various participants, without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy fields. Non-exhaustive policy priorities could be identified, such as:

- European values, fundamental rights and freedoms,
- Democratic and institutional aspects of the EU,
- Environmental challenges and the climate crisis,
- Social justice and equality,
- Economic and employment issues including taxation,
- Digital transformation,
- Security and the role of the EU in the world.

The Conference should take stock of the initiatives used in the run-up to the 2019 elections.

Organisation, composition and governance of the Conference process

Parliament proposed that the Conference be composed of a range of bodies with diverse responsibilities, such as: (i) a Conference Plenary, (ii) Citizens' agoras, (iii) Youth agoras, (iv) a Steering Committee and (v) an Executive Coordination Board. All bodies at all levels of the Conference should be genderbalanced.

Members proposed that several thematic Citizens' agoras reflecting the policy priorities should be held throughout the Conference process, and that they should be composed of a maximum of 200300 citizens with a minimum of three per Member State, calculated in accordance with the principle of degressive proportionality. They should be held in different locations across the Union and must be representative (in terms of geography, gender, age, socio-economic background and/or level of education).

According to Members, the membership of the Conference Plenary shall be constituted by:

- the European Parliament representing the Union's citizens with a maximum of 135 members,
- the Council representing the Member States with 27 members,
- the national parliaments with between two and four members per Member State parliament,
- the European Commission, represented by the three corresponding Commissioners,
- the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions with four members each,
- the EUlevel social partners with two members per side.

The Conference shall meet in plenary session at least twice per semester at the European Parliament. A high-level patronage should be ensured by the three main EU institutions at the highest level, namely by the Presidents of the European Parliament, of the European Council and of the European Commission. Parliament proposed that the Executive Coordination Board be composed of the three main EU institutions under Parliament's leadership.

Conference process communication and political memorandum

Members are of the opinion that all Conference meetings (including plenary meetings and Citizens' and Youth agora) should be web-streamed and open to the public. They insisted that all documents pertaining to the Conference should be published, including contributions from stakeholders, and that all proceedings should take place in the official languages of the Union.

Parliament called on the Conference to produce concrete recommendations that will need to be addressed by the institutions and turned into actions in order to meet the expectations of citizens and stakeholders after a two-year process and debate.