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#### COVER NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Conference on the Future of Europe - National best practices

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Delegations will find attached an overview of the best practices as regards the Conference on the Future of Europe national events.

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## AUSTRIA

- Minister Edtstadler initiated the national discussion process as early as June 2020, travelling to all regions/"Bundesländer", discussing with citizens, especially young people, experts and stakeholders.
- The "Digital Europe Day" 2021 in Austria was entirely dedicated to the launch of the Conference.
- On 25 May, a youth event on the Future of Europe was organized in the Bundesrat (2<sup>nd</sup> chamber of Parliament). Young people discussed with Minister Edtstadler, the President of the Bundesrat Buchmann, Vice-President of the EP Karas and Vice-President of the EC Šuica and shared their ideas about the further development of the EU.
- Events in various formats are being continued, e.g. "Zukunftsdialoge" (future dialogues) and "Zukunftslabore" (future labs). It is important that these events take place throughout Austria. Since the official launch of the Conference on 9 May, a particularly large number of events have taken place in Austria.
- As representatives at regional and local level are in constant direct contact with citizens, the "Europa-Gemeinderäte" – councillors at municipal level in charge of EU affairs – have a central role to play in the discussion in Austria. This initiative has been growing over the recent years and counts around 1.200 members by now.

### Events in Austria since 9 May:

May 2021: 15

June 2021: 20

July 2021: 5 (reported so far)

- On average, events for the Future Conference have taken place more than every 2<sup>nd</sup> day throughout Austria since the launch.
- 5 events have been organized by and for "Europa-Gemeinderäte".
- 7 events have been aimed directly at young people and schoolchildren.

### The most important topics of discussion at events in Austria at the moment:

- The opportunities to involve citizens more; the existing great interest of citizens in shaping European policy;
- Climate change as a challenge that we can only solve together;
- Especially the youth wants to be heard and actively shape the future;
- The Resilience Fund and the EU budget must strengthen structures, promote innovation and competitiveness;

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

- Europe must not fall behind in international competition;
  - Subsidiarity and regions must be strengthened ;
  - A reform of the CFSP is necessary, Europe must speak with one voice.
- 
- Austria has also launched a Website dedicated to the Conference of the Future of Europe - [www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at](http://www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at) ("Our Europe. Our Future"). The Website is online since 9 May and links to the EC platform. It offers information and support for the EU events and activities in Austria. So far, approx. 50 events have been registered until the end of the year.

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### BELGIUM

BE outreach efforts on COFE will be focused after summer and will involve both citizen dialogues and a citizen panel.

These concerns the federal level. Parliament and regional entities may complement such efforts. Our approach is a decentralized one.

- Citizen Dialogues are to be organized by individual ministries, involving interested citizens, civil society, social partners (where relevant) on any given COFE topic. Organisation is ongoing.
- Citizen Panel - efforts will be focused on 1 national panel of 40 to 50 citizens, randomly selected and guided by a facilitator, whose framework that will follow OCDE guidelines. It will focus on a broadly phrased question : how to involve citizens more or better in EU affairs. The intention is to focus on both selected content (such as for instance climate or health) and see how existing processes can be revised (or new processes revised) in order increase citizen's ownership of EU debates and decisions. The concept is still under development; an expert committee will help prepare it. The panel would be opened and closed by the political level, so as to raise awareness. A report will be drafted that could guide both the European but also the Belgian level in further reflecting on the future of these type of participatory exercises.



## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### BULGARIA

- Bulgaria expects a structured bottom-up debate, focusing on topics with practical dimensions, on which we could achieve a real added value in the near future.
- We have already started to promote the digital platform in our country, aiming at broader involvement of Bulgarian citizens. To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs encourages the use of the platform among the state administration and the non-governmental sector, including trade unions, employers' organizations, as well as at the regional level.
- Building on experience gained from the European Citizens consultations, our efforts will be focused on holding the Conference in the most inclusive and accessible manner, including the national parliaments and all layers of society, especially the young people.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently working on developing a framework position and action plan regarding our country's participation in the initiative. We have already consulted all relevant ministries, as well as a number of NGOs concerning their interest in joining the Conference.
- We are in full coordination with the representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Sofia, for the purpose of organizing joint events and using their regional centres around the country and contacts with civil society organizations. After the parliamentary elections on 11 July this year European Parliament's Office in Sofia together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will organise a large-scale event in hybrid format with the participation of Bulgarian MEPs, delegates to the Conference, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the citizens. In autumn will follow several local events in the big universities cities, organised with the assistance of Europe Direct centres.
- Some activities launched by the Diplomatic Institute to the MFA and the Atlantic club/PanEuropa already started in May/June and were dedicated to the EU strategic autonomy and resilience. We cooperate successfully with the embassies of Member States in Sofia and prepare cross-border events covering a large scope of EU citizens.

### CROATIA

Task Force on the activities under the Conference, chaired by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, with co-chairs from the Office of the Prime Minister and State Secretary for Europe (who is also a GAC minister) was established.

The members of the Task Force include a wide range of representatives, from government bodies, national parliament, local and regional authorities, as well as civil society.

Task Force compiled ideas and plans from all the relevant participant for conducting national activities to be held in different parts of Croatia, on a variety of topics.

Some of the activities are already implemented. The majority of events will be organized after the summer break.

Regarding the activities at the digital platform, different NGOs, universities, think tanks have registered their events. Some also in cooperation with partners from the neighbouring non-EU countries.

Dedicated link for the Conference was created on the web site of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, at and we use Conferences' hashtags on the social media. In addition, our public diplomacy department is going to finance projects of the non-governmental actors linked to the Conference.

### CYPRUS

- Regarding our internal planning, as the objective of the Conference is the wide participation of civil society, we see the process of organising events as a decentralised one.
- Having said that, the central point of contact for the Conference within the government will be the General Secretariat of European Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close collaboration, wherever possible, with the EC representation in Nicosia, as well as the Press and Information Office of the Republic as regards the organisation of events. The General Secretariat has already began the dissemination of relevant information regarding the Conference and its digital platform to the line Ministries/Deputy Ministries and has invited them to organise their own events involving as many stakeholders as possible. The General Secretariat will also provide guidance to Ministries/Deputy Ministries on substantial issues relating to the topics under discussion.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is itself planning to decide on a number of events on the basis of its priorities and involve other departments of the Ministry depending on the topic. Joint collaboration/co-organisation with other line Ministries is also foreseen. We are in the process of setting up a plan.
- On 1 June we organised a launching event with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the EP office, as well as the head of the EC representation, in Nicosia. Given the Conference's focus on youth, our event was focused on matters of special interest to the youth. Representatives of youth organisations, Universities etc. had a central role in it.



### CZECH REPUBLIC

Regarding the COFE at the national level, the CZ has two categories of (centrally organized) events: 1) those focused on the general public and 2) some additional events with stakeholders. These are complemented by dedicated online activities on Euroskop.cz portal. Both groups are coordinated by the Section for European Affairs at the Office of the government (PM's office), in many areas in close cooperation with the Representation of the European Commission in the CZ, European Parliament Liaison Office and the network of regional Eurocenters and Europe Direct centers.

In the light of preparing the COFE, the CZ draws on the experience of organizing Citizens consultations in 2018 and regional debates held in 2019 on the occasion 15th anniversary of its membership in the EU.

1. **Public events with citizens** (a key part, the vast majority of events) take place in the capital (opening and closing debates) and main cities of CZ regions across the country.

#### Kick-off event in Prague

- CZ officially kicked off the Conference in Prague in the form of an opening event (in a hybrid format), which took place on June 3.
- The speakers (among them the VP of the Commission V. Jourová, state secretary for EU affairs M. Hrdinková, chair of the EU committee in the Parliament (Senate), journalist, representative of the NGO "Youth Speak-up", director of one of the leading sociological research institutes in the CZ) answered 10 questions formulated by 100 randomly selected Czech citizens divided into 10 focused groups.
- National part of the COFE in the CZ will be concluded by a stock-taking event in spring 2022 (TBC).

#### Regional debates

- The opening event was followed by three regional debates in June (Plzeň, Pardubice, Ostrava), which were organized in an online format. At least 9 more debates organized in each of the CZ regions will follow in the second half of 2021 (physically or in hybrid format depending on the pandemic situation).
- Other smaller events (workshops, debates, etc.) will be organized in the regions as per local needs and demands.
- The last of regional debates will follow in spring 2022 (TBC).

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### 2. Debates with stakeholders (including members of both chambers of the national parliament, MEPs, social and business partners, representatives of think-tanks, NGOs, academia).

- For this purpose, the CZ uses the preexisting platforms, especially the **National Convention on the EU** (established in 2014) to discuss rather institutional and technical issues related to the EU reform.
- Besides, the CZ is organizing **specialized workshops** (April 26th, June 24th) focused primarily on how to raise awareness and encourage public participation in the COFE. Representatives of the Government also present the COFE at various events organized by the stakeholders (e.g. Union of Towns and Municipalities).
- The idea is also to include some **transnational events** (such as the Prague European Summit – “Future European Leaders Forum”, 12. – 14. 7., project „Decide on Europe!“ in autumn 2021, etc.) into the framework of the COFE.

### 3. Information provided on Euroskop.cz portal

- Official portal of the Government on the EU, Euroskop.cz, will provide information and updates on organization and developments within the COFE, complemented amongst other activities by an original series of articles on speeches by important Europeans on the future of Europe.

Finally, it should be noted, that the overview of the activities organized under the COFE mentioned above **applies only to centrally organized events**. However, the civil society, ministries, and other actors in the CZ are indeed starting to organize their events **and feeding their inputs into the Platform**.

### DENMARK

- Preparations for the national debate in Denmark are well under way. Our vision is a broad and inclusive debate where civil society and other non-governmental actors will play a central role.
- The government is working closely with the Danish parliament to create a conducive framework around the national debate. This includes a joint kick-off event on 24 June, where actors from across civil society, trade unions and the private sector are invited to attend. These actors will be encouraged to actively partake in the national debate and to organise events of their own.
- Furthermore, a designated pool of public funds has been launched to support debates and initiatives hosted by non-governmental actors during the Conference. A grant of around EUR 81.000 (DKK 600.000) has already been awarded to a consortium of local EU-organisations, who will be organising 28 debates across the country. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and other ministers and politicians are expected to participate in a number of the debates hosted by non-governmental actors.
- In addition to such initiatives, the government and parliament are planning to organise a series of official events, such as citizen consultations and a couple of more traditional panel debates. The initial event, known as the "Eigtveds Dialogue" was conducted in September 2020 and received a lot of positive attention. The event was hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and key experts, citizens and other stakeholders were invited to attend either in person or virtually. The plan was to conduct two additional dialogues during the winter and spring, but due to Covid-19 restrictions, the events have been postponed until after the summer, where we hope to be able to resume some degree of physical attendance during events.

## ESTONIA

- I. CoFE launch event „What does Europe learn from the COVID-19 pandemic situation?“ , attended by Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, Commissioner Kadri Simson, MEP Sven Mikser ja Member of Riigikogu Urmas Reinsalu. The event is available: [https://ec.europa.eu/estonia/events/20210510\\_Mida\\_on\\_Euroopal\\_koroonakriisist\\_oppida\\_et](https://ec.europa.eu/estonia/events/20210510_Mida_on_Euroopal_koroonakriisist_oppida_et)

- II. Arvamusfestival (Festival of Opinions) 13.-14.08 in Paide, Estonia

Several stages and panels in the open air format with the politicians, opinion leaders, other decision makers. Main stage debate „What kind of changes does Europe need?“. Welcome speech and panels discussion with the President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid

- III. Regional debates: „How does Europe help moving local life forward?“ September - October 2021

Events/public debates are organized ahead of the municipal elections. Major events in 6 regional „hubs“ - Narva, Pärnu, Kuressaare, Võru, Tartu, Tallinn and/or Hiiumaa. Each event is moderated by the local journalist. Panels involve representatives of the local communities – politicians, entrepreneurs, youth, other groups. Questionnaire concerning the future of Europe is planned for each event. Each event is filmed by the Estonian broadcaster ETV, as the result there should be 6 TV-programmes (interactive conversations with local life representatives, citizens etc. The aim is also focusing on projects (co)financed from the EU budget. Reports are planned from each event and added to the CoFE digital platform. In addition to the interest groups are encouraged to organized their own events. Citizens also have a possibility to submit their comments/recommendations on the CoFE dedicated webpage of the Government Office of Estonia

- IV. Ministries are encouraged to take part of the project „Back to school“, in order to give EU related lectures in secondary schools and gymnasiums.



### FINLAND

Finland has a long tradition of public debate and participation. The Conference is seen as a true possibility for active interaction with citizens. The bottom-up approach is important for the Government and especially young people would be encouraged to participate.

The Finnish Government sees facilitating direct participating opportunities for citizens in the dialogue on the EU's future as one of the most important priority within the CoFE. The Finnish Government has two main lines of activity for achieving this:

- 1) The government is currently preparing a series of discussions around Finland during fall 2021. The government would participate in these discussions at ministerial level. Minister for European Affairs Tytti Tuppurainen will play a key role. Other Ministers will participate as well.

The Prime minister's office is coordinating this series of discussions. Finnish Government is planning to cooperate with other entities, such as cities, local authorities, universities or NGOs, when planning and organizing the events. As a part of this series of discussions, Finnish Government also intend to organize future-oriented debates within our national EU coordination system (which brings together government officials as well as stakeholders and civil society groups).

- 2) Various other actors – such as the Finnish Parliament, regional and local authorities, the business community, academia, labor market associations and NGOs – are also active regarding the Conference. The Finnish government is encouraging different stakeholders to participate and organize events under the CoFE and to use the digital platform.



### FRANCE

La France mettra en place un exercice participatif composé de 18 conférences régionales en métropole et Outre-mer, regroupant chacune 50 citoyens tirés au sort et représentatifs de la diversité de leur territoire, qui se tiendront sur 2 week-ends de 3 jours en septembre, en présentiel (sous réserve de l'état de la situation sanitaire). Les 900 citoyens seront amenés à s'exprimer sur une question unique, et non sur des thèmes précis comme dans le cas des panels européens. Une conférence nationale de consolidation, qui se tiendra mi-octobre en présence de citoyens issus des conférences régionales, sera chargée de la rédaction des conclusions qui constitueront la contribution de la France à l'exercice. Le gouvernement mettra en place un collège de garants indépendants garantissant l'impartialité et le bon fonctionnement de la consultation nationale.

### GERMANY

- Germany plans to set up a broad and decentralized dialogue process and to involve citizens, civil society, different federal ministries, our national parliament and the regional level. As Federal Foreign Office, we assume the coordination role for the contribution of the Federal Government, together with the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Press Office (for communication).
- Federal press office has set up a dedicated website for informing the German public about the Conference in general and about the Federal Government's events in particular and to promote the digital platform: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/konferenz-zur-zukunft-europas>
- We're aiming at mobilizing as many citizens as possible from all walks of life and from all regions of Germany to engage in the discussion. As Foreign Office, we're particularly interested in organising transnational citizens' events
- The following Conference events organised by the Federal Government have already taken place or will take place in the next weeks (in virtual/hybrid format):
- On 11 June, Federal Foreign Minister Maas and his Italian counterpart di Maio listened to the ideas 30 pupils from four German and Italian schools presented about the future of Europe. The day before the pupils took place in a virtual workshop where they elaborated their ideas on subjects such as European solidarity, Europe's role in the world or European values and identity.
- On 15 June a similar event took place, bringing together Minister of State Roth, his Czech counterpart Chmelař and 30 young people from both countries, also with a virtual workshop the day before.
- On 18 and 19 June the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs organised a two-day event for citizens about the consequences of the pandemic on social questions in Europe.
- On 10 July the Federal Ministry of Health will organise a citizens' dialogue on health and digitalisation.
- Regional governments (federal states/Länder) are also interested in organising Conference events, including transnational citizens' dialogues. For example, Saxony foresees a joint event together with its neighbours from Poland and Czech Republic.

### GREECE

- The national participation, including communication with the National Parliament, other ministries and authorities, the Commission's Representation and the EP's Liaison Office, is coordinated by the Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs (in charge of EU affairs), assisted by an MFA Task Force and a Special Envoy.
- The national priorities were established at government level and a concept paper with these priorities was distributed to all MS.
- Guidelines on organizing events were put together and sent to all potential organizers, by the MFA, in cooperation with the Commission's Representation and the EP's Liaison Office in Athens. These guidelines are based on the official Conference guides.
- A national digital platform was set up ([www.futureu.gov.gr](http://www.futureu.gov.gr)), which actually promotes the EU-level platform, links it with the national perspective and encourages citizen participation.
- We tried to profit from this year's double anniversary: 40 years since the country's accession to the then European Communities and 200 years since the Greek Revolution. We are building on this happy coincidence to raise public awareness. This was the concept of our hybrid high-profile event on May 27th, in Athens, which marked the official launching of our national campaign for the Conference, and was honoured by the Greek President, the PM, PM Costa, President Sassoli, President Michel and President Von der Leyen.
- The national deliberation is already underway. Its main components are:
  - Raising awareness through articles, interviews and other contributions in the Press and the social media.
  - Organizing consultation events at the level of the country's 13 Regions, with a thematic focus for each event, taking into account the Region's priorities and outstanding challenges.
    - The first event took place at the Region of Western Greece and the focus was on Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation. The second shall concentrate on structural funds and cohesion policies (Central Greece).
    - We seek to ensure the participation of officials from other MS or/and the EU institutions in these events. Depending on the topic, we also encourage the participation of regional partners who are not members of the CoFE Plenary. For example, the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean was invited to address the event on Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation; officials from the Western Balkans are expected to take part in a discussion about Enlargement in Thessaloniki.

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

- Mobilizing stakeholders such as Municipalities, Chambers, professional organizations, Universities, schools, the Academy of Athens, the Church and various other bodies of our civil society at large, and encourage them to organize their own events and participate actively in the deliberations.



## HUNGARY

### Hungarian best practice regarding the involvement of citizens in the process of decision-making

- Hungary is committed to focusing on topics in the interest of our citizens instead of abstract ideological debates. The Conference on the Future of Europe must focus on the most important issues in the eyes of citizens. However, we also believe that it is not enough to listen to citizens; their ideas must be integrated into the decision-making process. To this end, the Government of Hungary has been conducting **National Consultations** with Hungarian citizens since 2010 in order to integrate the citizens' views into government policy. For more information about National Consultations, visit [AboutHungary.hu](https://abouthungary.hu).<sup>1</sup>

### Hungarian best practices regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe

- We believe that involving citizens in decision-making processes is the very basis of every democracy. We applaud the fact that the European Union has also recognized the democratic potential of involving citizens more directly and we encourage the EU to base the whole Conference on the opinions of citizens.
- As a neighbouring state of Serbia, we particularly encourage the inclusion of **Western Balkan partners** in the future of Europe. Their involvement in the process could send a strong political message and inspire them to meet the conditions for accession. Therefore, we emphasised during GAG and other Council formation meetings the necessity of their full involvement.
- Concerning the national plans and actions, the government adopted a proactive approach. We are promoting the whole CoFEU initiative in the public administration and are raising public awareness. We count on civil society and academia, which have been very active so far in terms of organising both in-person and online events in Hungary. We are also advocating the organisation of national citizens' panels but this is obviously in the hands of civil society.
- For example, the Ministry of Justice and the Ferenc Mádl Institute for Comparative Law co-organised two high level international events in 2020, before the Union level conference-series has officially started. The two events were held on 25 June<sup>2</sup> and 21 September<sup>3</sup> 2020. The speakers among others included **Karoline Edtstadler**, Austrian Federal Minister for the European Union and Constitution, **Dubravka Šuica**, Vice-President

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<sup>1</sup> About Hungary: <https://abouthungary.hu/search/national%20consultation>

<sup>2</sup> See the summary of the event: <http://mfi.gov.hu/en/esemenyek/keynote-discussion-on-launching-the-conference-on-the-future-of-europe/>

<sup>3</sup> See the summary of the event: <http://mfi.gov.hu/en/esemenyek/dialogue-on-the-future-of-europe-how-to-build-a-more-effective-end-genuinely-strong-union/>



## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

of the Commission, Antonio Tajani, former President of the EP, and other high level speakers.

- **The Ministry of Justice and the Ferenc Mádl Institute of Comparative Law organised the third conference on the Future of Europe. The conference took place in the Delegation Hall of the Hungarian Parliament on the 21 June 2021. The conference focused on the future of the European Union in terms of digitalisation and competitiveness. We are pleased that high level speakers – such as Commissioner Gabriel and State Secretary Zacarias – accepted our invitation to participate in the conference.**
- **To ensure democratic legitimacy, we provided citizens an opportunity to send questions to be asked from the speakers. We particularly encouraged youth organisations to participate in events and organise conferences.**
- **In order to actively involve the young generation (up to 35 years), the Ministry of Justice published a call for papers in the subject of “Future of the EU”. The call invites young Hungarians to express their opinion in several topics. The first three papers will be awarded and the authors’ works are going to be published.**

## ITALY

- Italian general position on the Conference has been set in the Italian NON PAPER of February 2020 that is now under revision given:
  - The latest developments
  - The delay on the original schedule of the Conference
- We will share this new document with you after its adoption.
- Coming to our national activities related to the COFOE, Italy has recently adopted its **governance structure** based on two new Committees. The first one is called WISEMEN COMMITTEE and the second one is the ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE.
- In the WISEMEN COMMITTEE will seat 35 eminent personalities with academic background and experience in the most active Italian think-thanks. Criteria for the selection of personalities have been: geographical representation (North/South cleavage in Italy), gender balance and age diversity (young academics or officials vs more experienced ones)
- This Committee will be responsible for the planning, preparation and organization of the events related to the COFOE.
- The WISEMEN COMMITTEE will be supported by the ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE that comprises official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department for the European Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.
- In this supporting Committee there also are representatives of the Upper and Lower Chamber (Senato della Repubblica and Camera dei Deputati) and representatives of the Regions and other local structures.
- The ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE held its first meeting on May 28 and will be serving as the main Committee until the first meeting of the WISEMEN COMMITTEE.
- Moving to the national plans, Italy aims at promoting initiatives involving young people from the EU, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean countries.
- We are already working to two big events that will take place at the end of the year and will involve young people from the EU and the Western Balkans (first one) and young people from the EU and the Mediterranean countries (second one). In our perspective, youth participation in this exercise is crucial. In that sense our Minister of Foreign Affairs Di Maio, together with the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Maas, held a very interesting exchange with Italian and German students on June 11. Transnationality is and will remain a key concept for most initiatives organized in Italy. The students (aged 15-17) discussed a wide range of topics with the two Ministers and brought up very interesting ideas. One of these ideas was for instance the re-establishment at EU level of a "European students' chart" that could allow very young Europeans to travel and visit the European cultural places for free or with a substantial discount.

### IRELAND

Ireland's launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe took place on 14 May last and the first set of our regional meetings are taking place across June and July. Inclusivity and reaching out to all sectors of our community, particularly young people, will be very much the theme for our activities. In Ireland, we have a good track record of engaging with citizens through our Citizens' Dialogues and Citizens' Assemblies. We want to draw on this experience now in preparing a series of national events for the Conference. We plan for the programme of national events to include thematic and regional events, which will be a real opportunity to engage with people and communities all over Ireland. The events we are planning will initially be virtual, with the hope that, as the year and the Conference progresses, we will be able to host physical events once again.

Ireland is working closely with European Movement Ireland (EMI) on the Conference, continuing our collaboration from the earlier Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Europe held in 2018. We plan to hold 10 regional meetings during 2021, which will be livestreamed on YouTube (2 per region with the fifth region likely comprising Irish people living in other Member States). The first of these meetings took place last week with further meetings being organised over the coming weeks. These regional seminars will encompass industry, education and civil society, but we hope to extend these beyond the usual groups who interact on EU affairs. Ireland also looks forward to welcoming EU citizens resident in Northern Ireland to take part in Conference activities. This represents an important priority for Ireland in our approach to the Conference. We already have a number of all-island events planned as part of our current national programme under preparation.

Over the next month, our Minister of State for European Affairs, Thomas Byrne, will meet with representatives from the following communities and groups: LGBTIQ+, New Irish, Ireland's Local Youth Councils, and a number of young people undertaking their President's Award. Other specific groups with which Ireland hopes to engage across government-led events are set to include, young people, Gaeltacht Communities, those living on our off shore islands and EU citizens living in Ireland.

### LATVIA

- From 3 to 10 June, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in association with Latvia's higher education institutions organised a series of online discussions for students. They were aimed at promoting student engagement in the sharing of ideas and opinions on economic, social and security issues that are related to Europe's future. In three discussion sessions, students offered their proposals on how to move ahead on reaching the objectives connected with climate neutrality, and on harnessing the opportunities offered by digitalisation, while reducing risks related to data security. The EU's response to the pandemic was also evaluated and ways to ensure quality education and health care services in all Member States, and challenges were discussed in relation to the interpretation of the rule of law in Member States. During the final discussion, the students exchanged opinions on what the EU and NATO cooperation should be in the future, as well as discussing the EU's role in fighting hybrid threats, for instance, disinformation and cyber-attacks
- Recommendations by students will be uploaded on the digital platform as Latvia's national event. Many questions remain on how the national input will later find its way to the Plenary.
- Also further on we will put emphasis on youth engagement, as it concurs with the general principles of the Conference.
- MFA in cooperation with researchers will carry out a nationwide poll to understand the expectations and concerns about EU and Latvia's membership.
- Combined with previous polls, certain conclusions regarding tendencies could be drawn. Additionally, provide guidelines to our Council representatives and basis for further discussions nationally.
- MFA is closely collaborating with the EC and EP representations in Latvia, as well NGO's and think tanks to facilitate participation in the Conference.



### LITHUANIA

- In Lithuania, we have already started some of the activities related to the Conference.
- Lithuanian Parliament has been proactive since the very start of the CFE. Opinion on the Conference on Future of Europe has been adopted jointly by the European Affairs Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee in October last year.
  - **Special plenary marking the official launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe took place on 11 of May in the Parliament**, with participation of Commissions Vice-President Madam D. Šuica and the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the current EU Presidency Mr. Capoulas Santos. We expect ongoing engagement and a series of quality events in the Parliament devoted to the Conference.
- The national CoFe launch event took place in Vilnius on 7 of June in hybrid format. Top political leaders, experts and representatives from the organized civil society participated in a series of live panel discussions followed by an input and questions from the audience. The event was live-streamed by popular internet TV.
- Our approach is a “bottom-up” one as we think European citizens should play a leading part in building the EU. Citizens’ dialogues will be an essential part of the Conference in Lithuania. The Lithuanian MFA, in partnership with some think tanks and NGO’s, is planning 15 regional discussions, with different audiences and citizens from all walks of life.
- We are also keen to facilitate involvement of EU citizens from other Member States. Therefore, some of the events could be of transnational nature. For instance, there are plans to organize transnational debates in the margins of the 12th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. This year Lithuania will host this event.
- All events and panels will be registered on the Platform. The partners will provide summaries and recommendations.
- We regularly inform various NGOs, youth organizations etc. on the CoFe and invite them to organize their own events. We encourage the “bottom-up” approach and our role is mainly the one of a facilitator.
- Inclusivity and reaching out to all sectors of our community will be very much at the heart of Lithuania’s engagement with the Conference. We are all-in for the dialogue, listening to our people’s voice, and solving the issues identified. Until we are ready for physical events, expect the Commission’s digital platform to fully serve it’s purpose.



### LUXEMBOURG

- Luxembourg has supported the idea of this Conference from the beginning. The main priority in this Conference is to listen to citizens, as we believe that the involvement of citizens in the political debates on Europe is key, particularly in the current situation. With the challenges that the EU is currently facing, our attention should go towards delivering concrete results for the EU and its citizens.
- **Events already organised:**
  - On the occasion of Europe Day 2021, which also marked the start of the Conference on the Future of Europe, an exchange took place in Schengen between citizens, MEPs, and Commissioner Nicolas Schmit on the theme of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Citizens were invited to ask questions about the future of Europe and to make their voices heard.
  - A podium discussion took place on Monday 21 June 2021 with the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Jean Asselborn, and the Minister Delegate for European Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Michael Roth. The Ministers exchanged views with German, French, and Luxembourgish high school students.
- **Next steps and priorities:** The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is planning to organise an event on **cross-border regions and barriers to free movement**. Further events are currently under consideration by various stakeholders.
- **National promotion:** The government has set up a [dedicated tab on its website](#), linking to the digital platform. It is available in four languages: FR, DE, EN, and LU. Luxembourg actively supports the participation of citizens in the online platform.
- **National participation:** Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn participated in the first plenary session of the Conference on the future of Europe. Regarding the nomination of a citizen, Luxembourg attaches great importance to the involvement of youth in this process, and therefore the Youth Parliament was offered the opportunity to nominate one of its members to participate as a national citizen in the first plenary.

### MALTA

Maltese national authorities are adopting a citizen-centric two-pronged approach in their activities related to the coordination of the promotion of the Conference on the Future of Europe in Malta, as well as with regard to the coordination of national events.

Malta's national efforts are being coordinated by a national organisation committee. This committee is composed of members from the Malta Foreign and EU Affairs Ministry, the National Agency for EU Affairs (SEM), and the Permanent Representation.

Firstly, national authorities in Malta are working to raise awareness of the Conference, its purpose, its instruments (such as the Commission's Multilingual Digital Platform), and the importance and ease of citizen engagement and participation through various communication channels. Societal stakeholders, civil society organisations, youth organisations, and citizens in general are being encouraged to organise events and initiatives which are related to the future of Europe and otherwise engage with the Conference and its debates. They are also being encouraged to make the most of the potential offered by the Multilingual Digital Platform in terms of sharing and discussing ideas, and also promoting their events. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring that all the outcomes and recommendations and outcomes emerging from these discussion and debates are included into the Multilingual Digital Platform is also being underlined.

Secondly, national authorities are also actively reaching out and engaging with citizens from a diverse socio-economic and cultural background to encourage them to engage with the Conference and draw them into the process as active participants. This approach is founded upon close cooperation with civil society organisations, social partners and other stakeholders including the European Parliament Information Office and the European Commission Representation in Malta.

In this way, national authorities are encouraging citizens to take part in debates, discussions and dialogues that will be organised over the coming months, starting with some events being held during the summer period.

Malta's national events programme was formally launched in May 2021 and was jointly hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister, who is responsible for social dialogue. Political figures also appeared in the media around the timing of the Conference launch event and Europe Day to draw attention to the Conference process and encourage citizens and stakeholders to engage and participate.

National authorities are planning to organise several citizen dialogues dealing with different topics such as health, the digital and green economy, and the economy post-COVID-19.

Together with our partners, we want to ensure that this initiative is not another passive listening exercise but one in which every citizen feels that they have a voice in shaping the European future.

## THE NETHERLANDS

- The Netherlands has actively picked up the organization of citizens consultations. It will be focused on the wishes and desires of Dutch citizens from the EU.
- The citizens consultations will consist of 2 elements:
  1. The Netherlands institute for social research will provide an addition to the report of 2018, the previous citizens consultations. This consisted of quantitative and qualitative research.
  2. The organization of citizens dialogues, executed by an independent third party. The government is currently still in the process of selecting the third party to design and organize the dialogues. We hope to start in summer, in order to have the reports available ahead of the thematic plenaries.

As we are still in the process of selection, it is yet unclear how many dialogues will be organized, and citizens to take part. From the government, an important condition in the organization of these dialogues is inclusiveness and representativeness of the participants, with attention for the diversity of backgrounds (e.g. regional diversity, social economic, education, youth, etc).
- We will consider engaging ministers in the public debate at a later stage, based on the outcomes of the consultations.
- Lastly, specific attention is paid to the communication of the Conference, as well as the consultations. We will actively inform organizations, unions, citizens and others on the Conference.
- The Dutch parliament has indicated their intention to be active in the public debate, and possibly organize event(s) and/or dialogues around the Conference.



## POLAND

- Polish government has undertaken extensive outreach to raise awareness and promote direct participation in the Conference of the citizens as well as the wide variety of stakeholders. Information about the Conference and an invitation to directly contribute to the discussion on the future of Europe was issued to a number of non-governmental organizations, think tanks, universities, local government and central ministries. Conference is being promoted on the official government website.
- A comprehensive plan is still under discussions. Nonetheless, the government has already initiated the cooperation with social partners and NGOs. One example of the government organized event is a conference on the Polish vision of the strategic autonomy, planned for September, 23 2021 with participation of Polish minister for the EU Konrad Szymański, representatives of think tanks, academia and interested citizens. We aim to focus considerable part of the events on specific content, rather than general institutional discussions. The Prime Minister's Office has asked other ministries to follow suit.
- At the local level Polish government has encouraged the involvement of the Regional Offices for International Debate. They are managed by NGOs and universities and supported by Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there is one in each of 16 regions. We are counting on more than 30 events to be organized at the regional level, at least 2 per each Regional Office, on the variety of topics within the scope of the Conference.
- There is also considerable involvement on a parliamentary level. Within Polish Sejm (first chamber of the Parliament) a dedicated subcommittee on Conference on the Future of Europe has been constituted. Moreover, Committee for EU Affairs has come up with a position paper on moderation within CoFoE calling for transparency of the process as well as on summarizing moderation activity in separate report annexed to the final CoFoE report.
- Apart from the government lead effort citizens across the country are getting organized. At the digital platform we observe several events logged under the umbrella of the CoFoE, thus the government will continue encouraging this grassroots involvement.

### PORTUGAL

Citizens' active participation in the Conference on the Future of Europe is an important priority for Portugal. The Multilingual Digital Platform is key towards achieving this goal. It is crucial to promote the registration of citizen-led events in the Platform to stimulate public interest and participation in the Conference, namely youth participation (a particularly important target group for Portugal).

The Government has joined forces with the Portuguese Parliament, the national Economic and Social Council, the National Youth Council, the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities and the delegations of the European Parliament and the Commission to organize nine events spread throughout the country (including the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and of Madeira).

They are expected to take place in partnership with local authorities (e.g. municipalities), universities, schools (e.g. 'EU clubs'), social partners, local civil society organisations, among others. The objective is to make space for citizens' interventions in these events and to stimulate their active participation.

Therefore, most of the speaking time will be allocated to them and proceedings will be structured in an informal way, as much as possible. Portugal is keen to attract a diverse audience when it comes to age, gender and education, as well as socioeconomical background and geographical location.

Additionally, we plan to keep the same moderator across all events. Preference will be given to an individual with a media background (e.g. a journalist). The national government will put together the opening and closing events, as well as two of the regional events, the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal will be in charge of two others, the Portuguese Parliament will take responsibility for two more and the Representation of the European Parliament in Portugal will organise the event in Madeira.

These events are planned to take place between July 2021 and March 2022. A final national report is also planned for March 2022.



### ROMANIA

In follow up to GAG discussion of 17 June, please find below a summary on the approach and organization of the CoFE relevant events in Romania:

The organization of the events is governed by the logic that the consultation process under the Conference on the future of Europe (CoFoE) needs to keep the citizens at its core. The organization remains mainly decentralized, with events that should be generated by citizens, or should engage citizens if organized with the support of public authorities, be it Government, Parliament or local authorities.

The role defined for the Government is twofold, aiming to support communication around CoFoE, the digital platform and the citizens' events, as well as to contribute with content to the conversations around the future of Europe.

Through the participation of high-level officials in events, the intention is to give visibility to the dialogue on the future of Europe or to inject ideas in the public debates. Middle management or experts from the different parts of the administration are also encouraged to engage in the citizens' events, so as to bring informed opinions and expertise on the topics to be address in the framework of the themes included on the digital platform.

Dedicated events relevant for the discussions on the future of Europe will be also hosted or co-hosted by the administration, with the aim to channel the discussion towards most of the CoFoE themes. As an example, the MFA established a partnership with the European Institute of Romania (organization that also participates in the Europe Direct network). This partnership aims at supporting the organization of a series of events between June 2021 and March 2022, covering a variety of topics, from the kick off debate on the purpose and expectations from CoFoE, to digitalization, sustainable developments, EU's strategic partnerships, to name few of the envisaged dialogues. The first event in this series took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021, with a discussion associating MFA's Secretary of State for EU Affairs, as well as opinion leaders and EU experts, in an online dialogue with citizens regarding the objectives of the Conference, its purpose and results that could be expected.

To date, the planned format for the events is digital, though hybrid events are to be considered, pending the evolution of the sanitary situation.

MFA is also in close dialogue with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, as well as with the EP Office in Bucharest, so to ensure coordination and complementarity as regards communication and organization of events. Joint organization of events is also envisaged.

The first citizens' event in Romania was registered on the digital platform on 22 April. The events up to now covered a variety of issues, from digital and climate to education, resilience, role of the civil society, connectivity.





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

## National perspective on the Conference on the Future of Europe

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

- Government document adopted on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2021
- Sets out basic principles and positions in regards to CoFoE
- Slovak model based on two main pillars – WeAreEU project and the National Convention on the EU

## **Official launch of CoFoE in Slovakia**

- Ceremonial event at Bratislava Castle on 9<sup>th</sup> of May
- The President, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Slovakia together adopted a joint statement





Conference  
on the Future  
of Europe

## CoFoE process in Slovakia



MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN  
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC





## Preparatory phase

May – July 2021

- **9.5.** The official launch of CoFoE in Slovakia - ceremonial meeting at Bratislava Castle
- **7.6.** Press conference of Foreign Affairs Minister and State Secretary for European Affairs introducing CoFoE and the digital platform, inviting citizens to join
- **8.6.** Online Kick-off conference
- **May - July:** introductory speeches of State Secretary for European Affairs at meetings of regional and city councils with the aim of activating local governments
- **May - July:** preparation for the implementation of the National Convention and the WeAreEU Roadshow
- addressing representatives of regions, cities and municipalities; civil society; other ministries; parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties; business sector; pensioners; the Youth Council of Slovakia and other interest and professional organizations with a call for cooperation in the organization of CoFoE

**Objective:** to ensure the widest possible awareness of KOBE and its opportunities

## Action phase

August – December 2021

### Main Activities of MFA SK under two main pillars:

- Road Show – nationwide tour of 25 cities in September
- National Convention on the EU – 20 expert working groups jointly coordinated by foreign policy think-tank and competent Ministry
- Nationwide citizens' consultations
- CoFoE Back to School – 200 presentations of representatives of MFA SK and diplomatic staff at primary and secondary schools
- WeAreEU university students discussions with the Foreign Affairs Minister
- Mid-term review conference on CoFoE in Košice

+ various activities organized by other actors and partners

**Objective:** organization of events within the 2 pillars of KOBE - WeAreEU and National Convention on the EU, creation of synergies and support of activities of partner organizations

## Assessment phase



- Summary of outputs and recommendations from the National Convention on the EU
- Summary of outputs from national consultations
- Recommendations for the Government of the Slovak Republic
- Final evaluation conference

**Objective:** collection of results from civic consultations and expert groups, finalization of recommendations for the Government of the Slovak Republic and the European decision-making process

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### SLOVENIA

The Government decided to **actively promote CoFE and encourage the civil society to organize the CoFE related national citizens' panels, register them on the digital platform and publish the recommendations to the plenary.**

#### CoFE related events in Slovenia, organized by the Government

The Government's kick-off event, titled "[National consultations on the Future of Europe](#)" was convened by Prime Minister on May 20 at Brdo pri Kranju, on the highest national political and expert level, with participation of the President of the Republic, his adviser, a former MEP and constitutional lawyers.

The Government will also dedicate its traditional annual event on high political level "[Bled Strategic Forum](#)" (BSF) entirely to the CoFE. Under the auspices of BSF, various smaller scale hybrid events, titled "Overture to the Future", with participation of citizens, already took place. These events are livestreamed on Facebook and archived on BSF's Facebook wall:

- Slovenian State Secretary for EU affairs had conversations on the future of Europe with his homologues from [France](#) (March) and [Spain](#) (early June) both in a hybrid mode, with participation of students of political science and youth respectively,
- A BSF event on June 17, titled "[Overture to the Future: Act III - EU Enlargement and development of relations with Eastern and Southern Neighborhood](#)", facilitated a discussion with High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a former MEP and other guests.

#### Other CoFE related events, organized by other institutions and civil society

So far, the following events are posted on the digital platform of the CoFE.

#### Before the first CoFE plenary:

- [»Postpandemic future – Between Necessary Green and the Inevitably Digitized Europe«](#), (June 17) (with a guest from the Representation of European Commission to Slovenia),
- [Conference before the beginning of Slovenian presidency](#), (June 17), co-organized by the Centre for International Relations of Faculty for Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana and the Trans-European Political Studies Association. The [recommendations](#) from this event have already been published.



## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### After the first plenary:

- National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia organizes an event, livestreamed on National Television, called **»Between Supranational Constitutionalisation and Subsidiarity«**, moderated by the Chairman of the parliamentary EU affairs committee, with various guests from political life and academia (21.6.),
- [Slovenian evening at the beginning of the Presidency](#), organized by Europe Direct's regional antenna (1.7.)
- [International Session of the European Youth Parliament](#) (31.7.)
- **»EU Youth Conference«** with a participation of around 150-200 representatives of youth and decision-makers, advocating the interests of all young people across Europe (end September).

These are just some of CoFE related events, taking place in Slovenia. The national citizens' debate has kicked-off and is expected to be in full swing during the Slovenian Presidency to the Council of the EU.

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

### SPAIN

The Government of Spain wants the Conference to be ambitious in its proposals and that all European citizens perceive the achievements associated with it. For that reason, we want to focus on realistic proposals, on innovative measures and to get the interest of the general public, not only of some minority sectors. We want the debate to reach every corner of the country, not only big cities or only specialized groups.

Despite being a European initiative, the aim of the Conference is to be an open process to all EU territories, so close cooperation between Member States and regions is essential.

In Spain, we have an Intensive collaboration with all the Autonomous Regions and with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, as well as with the Spanish Parliament.

### SUBJECTS OF INTEREST

From the contacts we have made by our European Secretary of State on a visit to different Autonomous regions and in contact with civil society, we have identified **four areas of special interest**:

- The European citizenship.
- cities in the European project
- the disadvantages of the territories identified in article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU
- The symbolic elements of the European construction, especially in sports.

### EVENTS

To define the Spanish contribution to the Conference on the future of Europe, we want to encourage the debate in Spain by three different channels:

#### THE NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

Starting in September, we will hold **four thematic events** with the aim of collecting the concerns and expectations of particularly relevant Spanish actors:

- The first would be about an International topic (EU, US and China relations), an event with representatives of the academic world and business.
- Secondly, the Expansion of the European citizenship statute, an event with binational citizens.
- The third event will be about the Role of the regions in European governance: event with a representative of the academic world and another of the associative movements for each Autonomous region.
- Finally, an event about Cities in European governance: event designed by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces.

## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

In addition to all that, there will be a **citizens' panel for young people**. **BINATIONAL EVENTS**

Moreover, we are also preparing a series of collaborative **BINATIONAL EVENTS** with the authorities of other Member States. In principle, it would be Portugal and France, for being our neighbours, and the Netherlands, since recently, we have published a non-paper with the Dutch government about open strategic autonomy.

- THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

On the part of the Autonomous Regions, we intend to carry out a joint exercise with them. These events could be about a number of topics, such as the demographic challenge, the social pillar, health union or sport, among others, although is still an open list. The list of suggested topics responds to the interest of covering all relevant issues at European level.

The idea is that each Autonomous region organize one or more event or citizens' panels together with other Autonomous region and, optionally, an individual event or panel.

**FINALLY**, I would like to add that the objective is to prepare a **final document** that reflect the opinion of the European citizens about the future of Europe, so that we can put it in the platform and then discuss it in the Plenary of the Conference.

### SWEDEN

Sweden has a long tradition of organizing, participating, and engaging with different citizens through our societal and association activities. Hence, Sweden will focus to utilize the channels it has established to raise awareness about the conference and strengthen citizen's dialogues and engagement about the conference. SE aims at maintaining a decentralized approach and views the conference on the future of Europe as a joint exercise between citizens, the government office, national parliament, political parties, social partners, and local- and regional representatives, Civil Society organizations, and other relevant societal stakeholders.

#### Approach & Initiatives

- SE will raise awareness about the conference and encourage CSOs and other stakeholders to organize national events, with the participation of ministers/high-level officials.
- SE will utilize media platforms such as social media and public service outlets to **engage in citizens' dialogues** through, for instance, **Q&A sessions**, which the EU minister has participated in.
- SE organizes policy discussions with stakeholders from the civil society and social partners to inform them about the preparation for the conference at the national and EU level and allow them to provide input regarding policy that is debated in the context of the conference.
- SE aims to use the initiative **EU handshake**, which has the purpose to strengthen participation, knowledge, and engagement on EU-related issues in Sweden. The target group in this endeavor are regions, municipalities, social partners, youth movements, and universities.
- SE EU-minister travels to various high schools and universities to engage in interactive debates and Q&A sessions about Europe's future with students.

#### Kick-off event:

- On the 10th of May, SE launched the Conference on the Future of Europe, which was organized by the EU-Commissions representation office in Sweden, European Parliament representation office in Sweden, The Government Office, Swedish Municipalities and Regions, National Board of Trade Sweden, Confederation of Swedish enterprise, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees.



## CoFE BEST PRACTICES

- The event covered a citizen's dialogue in an interactive way between youth participants together with the EU-minister, Swedish EU-Commissioner, and a Swedish MEP, where the topic concerned the EU: s future was debated.
- During the event, the Swedish European Movement announced the award of **SE European of the Year**.