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## COVER NOTE

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

Delegations will find in the annex an overview of national best practices as regards communication on the Conference on the Future of Europe.

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## AUSTRIA

- Austria attaches great importance to a broad-based debate on the future of Europe. Karoline Edtstadler, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution, therefore initiated the national discussion process as early as **June 2020**.
- The formal launch of the Conference was then used to raise awareness of the conference in Austria. The entire digital "Europe Day 2021" in Austria was dedicated to the launch of the Conference.
- Since the official opening, **as many as 135 events** have taken place in Austria.
- In Austria, there are numerous activities and events organised by the federal government, regional and local authorities, national and regional Parliaments, civil society organisations, social partners, associations and citizens. In November, the Federal Chancellery has hosted an **online-call** with the relevant stakeholders to hear the progress they have made in promoting the conference within their sphere of action.
- Citizens must be at the heart of the Conference. In this context, we attach special importance to the involvement of the **younger generation**. Their voice is of particular importance when it comes to questions about the future of Europe. In November, Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler hosted a "Young Conference on the Future of Europe" organized by the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Youth Association ("*Bundesjugendvertretung*"). About 100 young people aged 16-30 shared their ideas on the future of Europe. In addition, about 40 national events aim directly at young people and pupils.
- A **logo** (see left below) has been developed for the national process, which can be used by participants in addition to the official Conference logo. We also have designed **conference folders** and various **give-aways** that we hand out to interested citizens and institutions.

### National website

Since 9 May, a dedicated national website "Unser Europa. Unsere Zukunft" ([www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at](http://www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at)) offers information about the Conference and allows citizens to ask further questions via our conference mailbox ([eu-zukunftskonferenz@bka.gv.at](mailto:eu-zukunftskonferenz@bka.gv.at)). A specific **website calendar** informs about events in Austria. Another section provides **news updates** concerning the Conference on a weekly basis. Content regarding the Conference is also shared on the **social media** outlets of Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler and the Federal Chancellery, with a focus on Facebook and Instagram.

### Events since 9 May 2021

On average, events related to the Conference have taken place about **every 2<sup>nd</sup> day** throughout Austria since the formal launch. Find below a selection of **flagship events**:

- The opening ceremony on 9 May ([link](#))
- The Youth Event in the Austrian Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) on 25 May ([link](#))
- A discussion on Strengthening Europe at the European Forum Alpbach on 2 Sep. ([link](#))
- A series of youth-workshops on democracy by the Austrian Parliament  
*so far on 12 Oct. ([link](#)) an on 9 Nov. ([link](#))*
- A "Future-Hike" with Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler on 16 Oct. 2021 ([link](#))
- A Discussion on Europe's future with Western Balkans Youth on 28 Oct. ([link](#))
- The Young Conference on the Future of Europe on 17 Nov. ([link](#))
- A series of Future Labs (*Zukunftslabore*) so far on 12 May ([link](#)), 17 May ([link](#)), 2 Jun. ([link](#)), 9 Jun. ([link](#)), 21 Jul. ([link](#)), 8 Sep. ([link](#)), 29 Sep. ([link](#)), 6 Oct. ([link](#)), 24 Nov. ([link](#)),

### Events with Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler

#### Citizens, especially Youth

- Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler travelled to all regions (*Bundesländer-Tour*), discussing with citizens, especially young people. It is important for us to reach as many people as possible from all walks of life.

- Related to the younger generation, a flagship event in November organized by the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Youth Association (*Bundesjugendvertretung*) was of particular importance.

#### Municipal Counsellors (*Europa-Gemeinderäte*)

- The Municipal Counsellors in charge of EU affairs (*Europa-Gemeinderäte*) have a central role to play in the discussion in Austria. As representatives at regional and local level, municipal Counsellors are in constant direct contact with citizens. This initiative has been growing over recent years.
- Federal Minister Edtstadler invites the "Europa-Gemeinderäte" to an exchange of views on a regular basis, the last one dating back to November. In addition, information on EU issues and novelties is provided to the "Europa-Gemeinderäte" through a magazine (4x per year) and a newsletter (6x per year).

#### Experts, stakeholders and conferences

- Events in various formats, e.g. future labs (*Zukunftslabore*) are organized with experts and stakeholders on different topics. These discussions have so far covered the major part of the nine conference topics, including climate change and innovation, industry, energy, a single and secure data space in the EU, health, migration and the rule of law.
- Discussions on the future of Europe also took place within the framework of conferences and panel discussions, for example, the well-established Forum Alpbach, which resulted in a joint declaration at Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler's initiative – "*Alpbach Declaration on the Future of Europe*" ([https://www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at/user/documents/alpbach\\_declaration.pdf](https://www.eu-zukunftskonferenz.at/user/documents/alpbach_declaration.pdf)) .

#### Topics Austrian citizens are most interested in

- The Conference topics Austrian citizens show most interest in are "Climate change and the environment" and "Democracy in Europe". Other topics of high interest are "A stronger economy, social justice and jobs", "The EU in the world" and "Digital transformation". In addition, Austrian citizens see the strong potential in the European Union dealing with "migration". In the context of "health", it should be mentioned that the participants of the November-Youth Conference called for more attention to be paid to the issue of mental health.

# BELGIUM

## **Activities in Belgium at the Federal level**

Opening ceremony of the Belgian national exercise in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs Sophie Wilmès and EU Commissioner Didier Reynders. Subsequently, a panel focused on the subject “EU in the world”.

National citizen panel, with 50 randomly selected citizens, on "European Democracy" more specifically "public participation" in the EU, with a focus on communication, disinformation and the future of deliberative processes), organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The 5 Green Ministers and some State Secretaries organized a citizens' debate based on their portfolios (e.g., Telecommunications; Mobility; Gender Equality, Equal Opportunity and Diversity; Energy).

## **Activities in Belgium by the federated entities**

The federated entities also organized events ranging from youth debates, citizens dialogues, and a Hackaton.

## **Communication on the CoFE and the Belgian activities**

*The general communication about the CoFE to all Belgian citizens & The communication from the Belgian government and the organization (e.g., Europe Direct, Glassroots, VLEVA, Egmont Institute) to the Belgian about the CoFE and the national activities.*

## **General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE.**

Due to the nature of our country (federal system), communication around the CoFE is very decentralized. This means that everything has been very organic, which gives it somehow more legitimacy. Some entities used the information displayed on the digital platform while others used their own platform such as Facebook, Twitter and video and logo to give the CoFE more visibility.

## Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?

While there was some publicity on the CoFE at the European level, it did not generate a response. It appears that the quote 'Have your say' is meaningless and that if the publicity had been more focused on themes debated within the Conference ('Do you want a European army', 'Can we do more for climate change' e.g.) the engagement might have been greater. Citizens need to be provoked to stir up their engagement.

In Belgium sub-themes such as “how can living in a border region better be regulated by the EU?”, “The impact of healthy lifestyles and climate change on the quality of life” or “How can public participation in the EU be improved?”, worked well in provoking the interest of citizens.

Therefore, more **customer-centric communication through the right channels to the right audiences** will be better for the future of the CoFE. In addition, to ensure good communication, the following are useful (were applied for the Belgian citizen panels):

- A coordinator for the CoFE: Create one central EU figure who drive the CoFE
- Information sessions at different times in 2 languages
- The setting up of a listening unit that any citizen could contact at any time
- Permanent follow-up and guidance of the citizens with clear communication adapted to the target group: before, after and during each activity.

The Conference is an initiative for all and is ultimately supported and implemented by all.

Clear and transparent communication to all policy levels is essential in this regard. To improve the latter the three institutions could make an analysis together about the communication of the CoFE, preferably together with the citizens.

**Experience with journalists:** Despite the many advertisements and communications by the different Belgian entities to the outside world about the Belgian citizens' panels, youth debate, etc., there is little awareness of what Belgium is doing in general. For example, for the Belgian citizens' panels we did see that there was from the French-speaking side more press attention ((e.g., we got prime TV news once on RTBF (12h30 Saturday 13 October, 'national' news)), but on the Flemish side so far they are completely absent.

Also, at each event organized within Belgium around the CoFE, citizens asked what would happen after their participation with the proposed recommendations. To what will the contribution of participants in the framework of the Conference lead? This again showed the clear lack of communication on what citizens can expect after the whole process. Clear communication about this needs to be improved at the EU level so that it can be better communicated at the national level. For example, for the Belgian citizens' panels, we provided citizens with an intervention by someone of the Common Secretariat to make this clearer.

### **Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**

The official sample photos of the conference were always used for advertising in the newspapers and on the Internet. Furthermore, The content produced at the European level was by some entities (e.g., Wallonia-Brussels Federation) in Belgium translated the content produced at the European level, both in form and in content (the words used), to adapt it to their own visual identity and target audience.

Additionally, citizens received an information brochure prepared by the Ministry before the start of the first weekend of the BE citizens panels. A logo and a banner for social media were also created. Furthermore, A video made by Minister Sophie Wilmès was also distributed on social media.

### **Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**

Depending on the event, the following criteria were mostly taken into account

- Age
- Gender
- Socio-economic background
- Rural/urban
- Language NL/FR (when needed to have this division)



**What feedback have you received from audiences regarding CoFE in general, and communication on it in particular?**

There is a general agreement that the Conference on the Future of a Europe is a very good tool for participatory democracy. It demonstrates the willingness of the European Union to listen to its citizens. But there is also a consensus that the communication about the Conference is very weak as the citizens who have participated in the activities at different levels indicate that they had never heard about it or if they have heard about it they find it too complex (even students of, for example, the master of European politics).

The lack of readability of the process, and the absence of clear objectives are all problems that unfortunately make people think that this Conference may not lead to significant changes within the European institutions. In short, it was found that the initiative CoFE is/was quite unknown.

## BULGARIA

- **General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE**
  - **Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?**
  - **Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**
  - **Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**
  - **What feed-back have you received from audiences regarding CoFE in general, and communication on it in particular?**
- 
- From the beginning of the CoFE we are trying to build on our experience from 2018 and use the best practices, At the same time we try to upgrade them. Our intention is to communicate the CoFE in a more structured way and to achieve better coverage and involvement of the civil society.
  - The efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as leading institution are to organise large-scale events with cross border and European effect by launching the debate on key policies and issues for our citizens. Our past and current experience to invite Commissioners and to cooperate with the representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Sofia, as well as with the Embassies of MS, is very successful. I will give some examples. On 12 October 2021 a citizen's dialogue on Demography and Democracy took place in Sofia, with the participation of the Bulgarian and Croatian Foreign Ministers and the Commission's Vice President Dubravka Suica. The event drew the attention of a wide variety of participants and had a total reach of 36613 on Facebook and Twitter of the REP in Bulgaria and a total engagement of 412 reactions.
  - Few days later, on 15th October the Vice President Timmermans and Commissioner Maria Gabriel participated in a Conference on the Green Deal: Challenges and Solutions for Bulgaria. The Prime Minister and key ministers took part but also representatives of the business sector, social partners, experts and NGOs. The green and energy transition is one of the most discussed policies, which drew the attention also of the municipalities especially of those in the coal

regions. The topic was discussed during the Annual Conference organised by the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria.

- Several local events were held in the big university cities, organized with the assistance of regional Europe Direct centres. We are pleased to see the variety of topics with current and future significance related to the health and recovery from the pandemic, the just transition and the future of the Bulgarian coal regions, cleaner transport and logistics in our cities and regions, EU support for tourism development and creative industry, digital skills etc.
- Bulgaria will continue to work for organising similar discussions in the future as well to give a voice to the Bulgarian citizens. We are planning to work closely with the future French Presidency through the Embassy in Sofia taking into account the expectations of the civil society, as well as the French and Bulgarian visions for the priority issues to be discussed.
- During all events, we used EU-made communication assets. The multilingual digital platform is key and innovative instrument extremely useful in the pandemic situation. In this regard, we continue to promote it. We created a special chapter on the web site of the Ministry and publish the whole information or streamline debates on our Facebook page.
- But we have to intensify our efforts for better communicating. I see this by using more actively the media and social media to reflect the events organised not only at national level, but also to give a feedback of what resulted from the work done at European level: European citizens panels and plenary sessions.
- When it comes to the targeted audience, we are making efforts for broad involvement of the citizens, including at regional at local level. But obviously we put the focus on the young people. This is the reason to choose the topic of democracy and demography as one of our key events.
- It is too early to give a feedback but we may draw some preliminary conclusions on the ground of participant's reaction and our assessment. The citizen's dialogue seems to be the most appropriate format for public debates on policy issues. This format supposes a strong political commitment at national and European level. At the same time in order to reach the different stakeholders with specific interests we have to target concrete issues and deliver the appropriate

messages. Our intention should be to use the Conference as an opportunity for keeping the interest of our societies in EU matters and to make it long lasting and permanent.

# CROATIA

Activities in Croatia in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe have been successfully organized and implemented, especially in the period after the summer break.

Events are being organized in different parts of Croatia, on a variety of topics.

Ministries, central state offices, regional development agencies, universities, NGOs and institutes organize events in the form of conferences, citizens' dialogues and panels with citizens, public discussions and educational workshops, with special emphasize on youth.

Members of the Croatian Parliament, as well as Croatian members of the European Parliament also contribute to the discussions and activities.

From its part, the European Commission Representation in Croatia, in partnership with the European Parliament Office in Croatia, the European Documentation Centres and the Europe Direct network, organizes a series of debates promoted on their social media platforms.

Some of the events are also being held in cooperation with other Member States and non-EU neighboring countries.

In terms of thematic areas, the topics from the Multilingual Digital Platform that attract the most interest in Croatia are „Education, culture, youth and sport“, „Climate change and the environment“ and „Other ideas“, followed by „European democracy“ and „Digital transformation“.

Following the completion of the tender published by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 23 projects of the non-governmental actors linked to the Conference were chosen and are being financed by the Ministry. These organizations actively promote their projects on their web sites and social media networks.

Our practices in conducting the activities around the Conference might differ, but one thing we do have in common – outreach to the citizens. We are all very active but the visibility is limited. Regarding the activities such as plenary sessions or European citizens' panels, the coverage in Croatia is good thanks to our national news agency. Moreover, most of the Croatian participants of the European Citizens' panels promote the Conference, the particular panel and their own visions and ideas in the (local) media.

We face difficulties promoting digital platform to younger generation used to faster and more appealing social platforms and mobile apps. That might be something to consider for the future.

Having in mind that the whole process has started a year after originally planned, a lot have been done and achieved in the last six/seven months. For the coming period we need to develop further our communication activities and tools and be more active in disseminating information about the Conference and its goals.

# CYPRUS

## General comments

- Regarding communication on the CoFE, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and more specifically the General Secretariat of European Affairs, is following a strategy of dissemination of information to two categories of interested parties.
  - First, all Ministries, Government Departments and organised interested parties.
  - Secondly, the general public.
- The GSEA has opted for collaboration with the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus regarding primarily an outreach to the general public.
- We have also pursued collaboration with the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus and have signed a protocol of cooperation regarding the organisation of events.

## General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE

As regards Ministries, Government Departments and organised interested parties:

- We have been disseminating updated information on the discussions and material concerning the Conference via email, explaining at the same time the advantages of using the digital platform.
- The Minister himself has sent letters to his counterparts in other Ministries encouraging them to organise events.
- We have also given regular reports to the EU Coordination teams / units in the Ministries in relation to discussions and events organised, encouraging them to organise events.

### As regards the general public:

- First, through our collaboration with the Press and Information Office, we managed to put the CoFE in the context of their ongoing communication EU strategy. A section on the CoFE has been added on a special website, which is dedicated to EU Affairs. This section includes information on the CoFE related to events organised by the Government, as well as a link to the digital platform of the CoFE. The PIO also assists in relation to events organised by the Government (e. g. communication material, online streaming etc).
- Then, we created a specifically designed page on the MFA's website dedicated to the Conference, where we have uploaded information relative to the CoFE and our events.
- The Deputy Secretary General of EU affairs has participated in a TV program, called EUExplain, where she talked extensively about the CoFE.
- She has also sent letters to Universities, youth organisations and municipalities encouraging them to organise events.
- We are also using Twitter and Facebook to promote our events.

### **Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?**

- According to our experience so far, as human resources in the GSEA are limited, seeking collaboration with the Press and Information Office has been decisive in our communication campaign. So has our collaboration with the Repr. of the European Commission.
- Generally speaking, we have observed that Universities and Youth Organisations have been more flexible in organising events because of their technical infrastructure.

### **Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**

- So far we have primarily used EU-made communication material, e. g. logo and photos of the Conference, but we have also produced our own simplified guide on how to use the



digital platform, which was disseminated to different actors and uploaded on our dedicated web-pages.

**Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**

- We have tried targeting the general public, using simplified guides on how to use the digital platform and using social media to promote our events.
- In addition, a number of events in which the Minister of Foreign Affairs has participated have focused on the role of youth.

**What feed-back have you received from audiences regarding CoFE, in general, and communication on it in particular?**

- The social media have proved to be an effective tool in promoting our events.

# CZECH REPUBLIC

## **General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE**

We have organically incorporated COFE-related events into our communication efforts. Using the lessons learnt from Citizen Consultation in 2018 and national debates on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accession to the European Union, we have put into practice recommendations from civic society and other Czech stakeholders as to the design and framing of the events.

As of today, we have already organized 10 regional debates and preparing the final two for this autumn. Following the midterm stock-taking conference, we are planning to hold national citizen panels and more regional debates next year.

### **Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?**

Teaming-up with organizations of civic society, academia and schools has proven to be a very positive factor in raising awareness and involving more citizens into debate. Also, fruitful debates do not always entail the necessity to have a high-ranking person on-board; many locally known personalities contributed to very inspiring debates.

### **Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**

We have produced national materials using logo and graphics provided at the EU level. This is a viable method of work; localized and customized materials usually work better than uneditable EU-wide materials. This also helps with better identification of pan-European events and initiatives.

### **Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**

Particular attention was paid to involving younger generation; some flagship events were directly targeted at this group. Also, we tried to reach out beyond the “usual suspects” and involve silent majority in our country in the discussion.

**What feed-back have you received from audiences regarding CoFE in general, and communication on it in particular?**

The idea of COFE was received with mixed perceptions. More generous allocation of time for substantive debates and clear methodology of debates and outcomes from the beginning would be of particular help to remedy these mixed impressions. Despite our best efforts however, there are still times are faced with the idea that CoFE as a whole isn't very well visible. It would be helpful if the other EU institutions with representations in MS contributed to spreading the word both of the CoFE as a concept, and also of events organized by them and spreading the word of nationally organized events. Next Generation EU for example had a highly visible campaign, the same cannot be said of CoFE.

## DENMARK

- Before and during the Conference, Denmark has employed an active communication strategy with the aim of creating awareness and engaging citizens to take part in the Conference.
- Communication actions have included communication through national newspapers, online media outlets, a variety of social media platforms and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As an example, on the day of the launch of the conference [9 May 2021], the Minister for Foreign Affairs did an interview with one national newspaper and published an op-ed about the conference in another.
- Social media efforts have included several videos with the minister and posts containing information about the Conference, the digital platform and national events.
- Finally, a very central component of the Danish approach has been to engage non-governmental actors as a driving force for fostering broad and inclusive participation in the national debate. To this end, a designated pool of public funds has been launched under the Danish Board for the Advancement of Debate and Enlightenment Regarding Europe (Europa-Nævnet) to support debates and initiatives hosted by non-governmental actors during the Conference.

# ESTONIA

## Communication of COFE national events:

Estonia has communicated COFE national events using the EU-made communication materials: posters, logos etc. Estonia kicked off the COFE events on 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 with Prime Minister K.Kallas and Commissioner K.Simson discussing on Europe's future and what the European Union has learned from the Covid-19 pandemic. This was live-streamed, and people could ask questions online. Over the summer, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized e-lessons on EU affairs as well as more specifically on climate change that could be watched by school classes via Youtube. Together with the European Commission Representation in Estonia, the Government Office of Estonia organized five citizen debates in five different regions (Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, Võru and Hiiu) across Estonia. These were all streamed online on Facebook. At each debate there was a well-known local moderator and an expert panel that featured national/local politicians, entrepreneurs, representatives of youth, culture etc. At the citizen debates, the moderator introduced what COFE was and showed the COFE digital platform and made a call to action. Citizens' ideas and proposals from the debates were presented in the summary of each event on the COFE digital platform. There were also three thematic debates in three regions (Pärnu, Kuressaare and Võru) focusing mainly on climate change and green transition, organized together with the Commission Representation and Finnish, Danish and Swedish embassies in Estonia.

## Lessons learned from national COFE events

- well-known local speakers work as pull factors;
- it is useful to organize citizen debates back-to-back to larger local events (i.e., trade/book fairs);
- the more local the topics, the more vivid the discussion and more questions from the audience.
- Estonia also used specially made COFE questionnaires, which could be filled in on paper at all the events or digitally, and prizes were drawn among those who replied to the questionnaires. These questionnaires proved valuable as a feedback mechanism on EU themes for the Government Office and as a good source for ideas and proposals what citizens thought the EU should do more.

**Communication to introduce COFE central digital platform:** in November, Estonia launched a communication campaign specifically for the COFE central digital platform to introduce it to a wider audience.

Two videos were produced: one targeting the youth (18+), which features a well-known young Estonian singer and influencer who discusses his ideas and proposals on the future and introduces the COFE digital platform and shows how to submit your ideas. The second video is targeting a bit older age group (30+) and is showing a well-known Estonian designer doing the same. These videos together with the EU-made COFE poster run on mainstream Estonian digital newspapers and their local sites as a banner.

There is also a social media campaign running, featuring these videos on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. And they are also shown on TV, on Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR). In addition, the Government Office has been raising awareness for this campaign through press releases and by showing the videos on its formal Youtube and Facebook accounts and by informing all ministries and different interest groups, i.e. teachers, youth organizations, of this campaign and encouraging everyone to participate. As the campaign is still ongoing, it is too early to draw lessons.

## FINLAND

The Government of Finland in a close cooperation with with the Europe Information of Finland have been actively promoting the Conference and the events related to it.

During the launch of the Conference (May 2021) the Prime Minister's Office of Finland and the Europe Information of Finland were actively communicating of the start and aim of the CoFE towards citizens and media. The minister of European affairs, Tytti Tuppurainen, have played a central role in the communication, and she participated in live-debate and organized a briefing session for local journalist.

The Finnish government has launched (16.9.) a series of discussions ("We are Europe") around Finland during fall 2021 and the beginning of the 2022. The government have been participating in these discussions / events at ministerial level.

- Finland has a long tradition of public debates, in which the members of the Government have met with citizens' "with a cup of coffee" at grass-root level.
- In total, there will be 20 events and 13 ministers are participating.
- The Prime Minister's Office is coordinating the series of events.
- We have an own theme for the series of events, but we use also the CoFE logo and hashtags.
- The Prime minister's office has launched a website for the series of events (as an information point): [www.eurooppaolemmeme.fi/](http://www.eurooppaolemmeme.fi/)

When organizing these events, The Prime Minister's Office, the Europe Information of Finland and the other ministries that have been co-organizing these events, have been actively communicating about the events and CoFE at the local level. The focus has been in inviting citizens to take part to the discussion as well as raising awareness of the whole conference. The Social Media, local newspapers and targeted emails with close cooperation of local actors have been the main ways of communication. A poll for Finnish citizens by Europe Information of Finland was launched to feed in the discussion-taking place in the events

The situation and process at European level have been communicated by the Prime Minister's office of Finland during the CoFE plenaries and when CoFE has been topical in the **General Affairs Council**. Minister of European Affairs Tytti Tuppurainen have played a key role.

### **The best results in terms of citizens participating:**

1. When specified theme was selected to be discussed about in the event
2. When special groups was targeted as a base of the participators (e.g. local high school students of a region).
3. When the events were organized within an already existing event (e.g. in the biggest book fair taking place in Helsinki).

The best results in terms of communication have been when cooperating with main local newspapers. E.g. In multiple occasions the main local newspapers have agreed to share the livestream from the event on their online page. In these situations, the Medias have also made stories about the events and the discussion-taking place. On the other hand, one of the challenge has been that the main national media have not been keen on writing about the CoFE. The CoFE has not been a big topic in Finland at National discussion, which have of course decreased the general knowledge about the process.

Our aim has been to reach as wide and diverse group of participants as possible. We have had events all around our country. In addition, remote participation have been possible in almost all of the events. We have given special attention to young people, which have led to a good results. E.g. in multiple occasions we have done cooperation with high schools from the region of the events. The students have prepared in “pre discussions” topics for the events as a part of their curriculum and they have participated the events as a part of their curriculum. We have also organized the “most northern CoFE-event of the whole Europe” in Utsjoki, Lapland, which had simultaneously special focus for Sámi people (an indigenous Finno-Ugric-speaking people).

Our national EU coordination system ensures participation of stakeholders in preparing Finnish EU positions and initiatives already at the civil servant level through the so-called EU sub-committees. We wanted to offer also these stakeholders enhanced opportunities to participate in the debate on the future of Europe. On 22 November, we organized a joint Future Day for the enlarged formats of EU sub-committees. The even brought together nearly 400 participants, including a wide range of civil society representatives and other stakeholders, for 10 thematic discussions. Our Advisory Board for Civil Society Policy was also involved.

The feedback have been very positive from citizens that have participated the events. The



participants have been appreciating a lot the given possibility to have a say on the topics in an events that were organized as much as possible in down-up principle. On the other hand, at some situations we would have hoped to reach more audience with the invitations and events.



## L'avenir est entre vos mains

Conférences dans 18 régions

Septembre 2021

# Charte des bonnes pratiques

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# 1. Introduction

Le 9 mai dernier, le Président de la République a lancé à Strasbourg, aux côtés de la Présidente de la Commission européenne, du Président du Conseil et du Président du Parlement européen, la Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe.

La Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe est composée d'une série de débats et de discussions menés par des citoyens, qui permettront à chacun, dans toute l'Europe, de partager ses idées et de contribuer à façonner notre avenir commun. Cette concertation est menée au niveau européen notamment grâce à une plateforme en ligne ([www.futureu.europa.eu](http://www.futureu.europa.eu)) et à l'organisation de panels citoyens transnationaux.

18 conférences se tiendront en septembre dans toutes les régions de France.

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## 2. Calendrier

La Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe se déroulera sur deux week-ends de septembre 2021, dans 18 régions.

### 10 au 12 septembre

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes  
Hauts-de-France  
Île-de-France

La Réunion  
Mayotte  
Normandie

Nouvelle-Aquitaine  
Pays de la Loire  
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

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### 24 au 26 septembre

Bourgogne-Franche-Comté  
Bretagne  
Centre-Val de Loire

Corse  
Grand Est  
Guadeloupe

Guyane  
Martinique  
Occitanie

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# 3. Les bonnes pratiques

Où et quand faire des posts ?

La Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe est une initiative inédite de participation citoyenne. Il est normal de souhaiter mettre en valeur votre engagement et votre travail pendant ces débats citoyens !

Si vous souhaitez faire des posts sur les réseaux sociaux, voici les bonnes pratiques.

## Où et quand faire des posts ?

- en vous préparant au week-end
- en allant à la conférence (ex : dans le train, à l'arrivée, etc.)
- pendant les débats citoyens et les panels

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Exemples de contenus

## Exemple de contenus :

Une courte story présentant l'activité :

« Ce matin, c'est débat autour de la place accordée à la jeunesse par l'Union européenne ! »

Une photo de votre dossier de bienvenue avec un petit mot :

« Un weekend européen... Au travail ! »

Un post récapitulant ce que vous avez retenu des débats citoyens :

« Deux jours de débats intenses.. Le changement que je veux pour l'Europe, c'est plus de climat ! De jeunesse ! »

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## 4. Que faire avant de publier ?

Avant de faire un post ou de poster des photos sur les réseaux sociaux :

- Vérifiez que les **gestes barrières** (port du masque, distanciation sociale) sont respectés ;
- Veillez à respecter le **droit à l'image** des personnes ne souhaitant pas apparaître sur les réseaux sociaux ;
- Utilisez les **hashtags (#)** de la conférence ;
- Taguez les **comptes officiels**.

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## 5. Communication sur les réseaux sociaux



### Hashtags

#COFE2021  
#AvenirEurope  
#LAvenirVousAppartient



### Mentions

@cbeaune  
@francediplo  
@MFesneau



### Relais

Facebook  
Twitter  
Instagram  
LinkedIn

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## 6. Ce qu'il faut éviter

Les réseaux sociaux sont un formidable outil de communication. Mais il faut faire attention à ce qu'on y publie, car sur les réseaux sociaux, tout peut être réinterprété et rien ne disparaît vraiment.

Soyez respectueux. Pensez à respecter la vie privée des autres participants pendant la conférence.

Bonne Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe à tous !

# GERMANY

Germany contributes to the success of the Conference on the Future of Europe with strong citizens' participation, involving the Federal Government, Bundestag, federal states and civil society.

Our communication on the conference is based on three strands:

## 1. Focus on the conference and German conference members

- Information on the conference is available on a dedicated [website](#) of the Federal Government, featuring interviews with German plenary members and German citizens' representatives, articles on the conference and information on national events. German Conference Plenary members as well as government representatives promote the Conference through interviews as well as social media where they also highlight upcoming events.
- The two German legislative chambers, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, provide information on their websites, too. Plenary members from the legislative chambers inform the public on their conference related activities in interviews and on social media.
- Länder state parliaments organize public hearings on the future of Europe and the conference.

## 2. Focus on young people

- The Bundesrat, political foundations and other actors organize workshops and webinars on the conference in schools and other educational institutes.
- Advertisement towards young people is supported by the Länder State Agencies for Civic Education.
- The Federal Foreign Office, through its communication network, supports the online consultation "[Our Europe, Our Future](#)," for young people in Germany, which was launched in cooperation with the Franco-German Youth Office on November 26 and will continue until January 9, 2022.

## 3. Focus on dialogue events throughout Germany and with its partner regions in the EU

- It's our ambition to bring the debate on the future of Europe to the people in every region of Germany, including small cities and rural areas. More than 50 regional events have been organized by the 16 federal states of Germany.
- Besides, Cross-border events are a central element of many German initiatives, representing the manifold connections of Germany with its European neighbours.

- We encourage the various actors to coordinate projects, proposals, and events related to Europe and linked to the Conference on the Future of Europe. The [Berlin Initiative](#) is one example.

In January 2022 the Federal Foreign Office will organise a digital National Citizens' Panel with 100 randomly selected citizens as a tangible national contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe.



## GREECE

As far as the **main greek communication strategy**, we have made the decision to set up a distinct **national digital platform** ([www.futureu.gov.gr](http://www.futureu.gov.gr)), separate from the EU-level platform, which actually promotes and guides citizens to participate in the latter. To the same end, we have created **ad hoc social media accounts** for the Conference on facebook, twitter and instagram (our handle is @futurEUgr), through which we broadcast **live** all major events. Another strategic choice we have made is to remain **in close coordination** with the press offices of all the social, academic, economic, regional and religious stakeholders that we **mobilized** for the promotion of their events. Namely, we involved municipalities, Chambers, professional organizations, universities, schools and bodies of our Civil Society. An **official letter** of the Alternate Minister himself who is coordinating the National Dialogue was sent to that end just before the launching. Finally, from a communication perspective, we have **linked the Conference with the anniversary of 40 years** since the country's accession to the European Union aiming to profit from this happy coincidence to raise public awareness.

**In alignment and in execution of these basic communication strategies**, we raise **awareness through** articles, interviews and other contributions in the Press and the social media. Every week, citizens are asked **on our social media direct questions** and share their ideas on a certain topic of the Conference. We choose the topic inspired by the European Days of the week or by the upcoming events. We periodically launch **clickable media campaigns** including specially designed thematic banners. We organize priority-based **consultation events** throughout all 13 **Regions** of Greece, with a thematic focus separate for each region. We organize flagship events with the participation of **high-profile Greek and European officials**. For instance, the launching of our national campaign was honoured by the Greek President, the Greek and the Portuguese Prime Ministers, President Sassoli, President Michel and President Von der Leyen. We also use the **photo exhibition** created on the occasion of the aforementioned 40-year anniversary as a “**pull factor**” for our flagship events.

As for the lessons learned so far, events with the **participation of officials** from other Member States or the EU Institutions were particularly successful. Equally attractive proved the **participation of regional partners who are not members of the CoFE Plenary**, such as the Western Balkans in the discussion concerning the Enlargement in Thessaloniki. We also regard the multiple stakeholders' agreement for **mutual tags in their social media stories** as a very effective practice for the promotion of events. A final good practice was the creation of **facebook events** through the Conference's facebook account and their **sharing** in thematically targeted facebook groups.

As far as our communication assets are concerned, we mainly used the ones made by the EU to safeguard the European identity of the Conference. However, we often fabricate banners, graphics, press kits and goody bags for the major events.

Regarding the audiences, we have mostly targeted the youth, because it is their future that is primarily at stake. Beyond that, in the thematic regional events our audience is theme-based.

As feedback from Greece, we mention that Greeks **welcomed** the concept of COFE. They regard it, in globo, as an opportunity to make their voice heard. However, some of them would prefer it if specific questions had been posed **from the outset**, while others still **doubt** that the leaders will take their proposals **into account** in the end.

## HUNGARY

- 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.
- Concerning the national plans and actions, the government adopted **a proactive approach**. We are **raising public awareness and we are promoting the whole CoFoE initiative in the public administration as well**. 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.
- Hungary has been playing an active role in the Conference on the Future of Europe since the beginning. **We were the among first the Member States to launch the dialogue on the future of Europe**.
- The Ministry of Justice has organised more than 20 conferences in total so far. **The Ministry of Justice organised four high-profile international conferences** since June 2020, with the participation of several European commissioners and the former EP president. We are pleased that high level speakers – such as Karoline Edtstadler, Austrian Federal Minister for the European Union and Constitution, Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the Commission, Antonio Tajani, former President of the EP and State Secretary Zacarias – accepted our invitation to participate in the conferences. The fourth and most recent high-level international conference took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, with the enlargement in its focus. After Minister of Justice Judit Varga and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó opened the conference, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, State Secretary Dovžan, and minister Joksimović also shared their views. All agreed about the importance and urgency of the Western-Balkan integration.

- **Hungary communicates the results of the Conference through different events and debates. Hungary also organised 6 national citizens' panels in cooperation with civil society organisations in line with the topics of the Digital Platform.**
- With more than 400 events, Hungary organises about 10% of the registered events on the Digital Platform. Thanks to the proactive approach of Hungary after the first half year of the Conference Hungary takes the **first place among the Member States in terms of the registered number of events** on the multilingual digital platform.
- During the whole process of the Conference on the Future of Europe, we took the opportunity to organize roundtable discussions with the participation of former Hungarian ministers and public figures. To ensure democratic legitimacy the **citizens are free to share their views** and raise questions on specific topics related to the European Union during the series of talks.
- We continue to stress that citizens must remain in the heart of the Conference, institutions and ideological debates must not overtake the intended bottom-up nature of the process.
- Hungary believes that the Conference should not stop at the border of the capital city. **Involvement of towns are indispensable for the success of the Conference.** The Ministry of Justice has already organized several events in other cities to present the Conference to citizens and to collect their ideas about the Future of Europe.
- As a neighbouring state of Serbia, we particularly encourage the **inclusion of Western Balkan partners** in the future of Europe. We welcome the fact that Western-Balkan partners were invited to the Conference Plenary and we hope that this involvement will be substantial and meaningful.

- The Ministry of Justice strongly believes that the **involvement of youth** is essential in the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Ministry launched an essay writing competition, which is presided by Judit Varga Minister of Justice, for young people to share their views about the future of Europe. Harvesting the experience from this project we saw that young people are open to constructive dialogues about the future of Europe. Reading their essays outlined for us that young people have a clear and straightforward vision of the future of Europe.

## IRELAND

### **General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE**

Our communications have included press releases, social media posts and pre-recorded videos for the Conference. Minister Byrne has also written a number of op-eds for national newspapers and has contributed to the *Letters Page* of one of Ireland's most read papers. We are increasing our communications at present and are linking in with Local Authorities and Public Participation Networks, which has membership of over 15,500 local and voluntary community groups across the country.

### **Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?**

Smaller groups have worked well in our experience and the use of breakout rooms. It allows everyone the opportunity to have their say in a smaller setting. We have also provided participants with background reading (prepared by impartial academics) in advance of the regional meetings. This ensures that participants in the panels have some knowledge of the topics that will be discussed prior to the meeting. For ministerial meetings, officials have met with groups in advance of the meeting to discuss the Conference and answer their queries. These usually happen one week in advance of the event so participants have time to think about the various topics.

We have focused our smaller ministerial consultations on 3 guiding questions – where the EU is doing well, where the EU could do better, and what the person's ideal EU would look like in the next 10-15 years. This allows for a focussed discussion and allows for recommendations to be made from each meeting.

### **Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**

Our partners EMI Ireland have not used EU-made communication assets. We have included the EU made communications in our email signatures and have printed pop-ups for physical events using the EU-made branding.

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## **Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**

We have organized a number of panels in Ireland (both Dept of Foreign Affairs and European Movement Ireland)

These have included:

3 x Regional Panels – Connacht/Ulster, Leinster & Munster

4 x Youth focused panels – Gaisce, Comhairle na nÓg & a Youth Voices panel. An event with University students as part of the German State Visit to Ireland was also held.

6 x Sectoral Panels– LGBTQI+ Groups, New Irish Communities, Diversity and Inclusion Groups, Islanders, Inner City communities/ Fewer Opportunities, Travelling Community

2 x Irish language panels

1 x Irish Abroad panel – Irish in the EU

All event reports for the above events have been uploaded onto the platform. It is hoped to return to in-person panel events in 2022 dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.

## **What feedback have you received from audiences regarding CoFE in general, and communication on it in particular?**

Feedback from participants who have taken part in Conference events in Ireland has been positive with most being thankful for the opportunity to take part in Conference events. Feedback from younger participants has been extremely positive with participants commenting that “Europe does matter” and teachers noting that younger people are becoming more engaged on EU affairs as the year unfolds. Participants have enjoyed the discussions and meeting with people they may not normally have met and partake in insightful discussions on the EU.

However, some event organisers have received some questions from participants and potential participants about how national events fit into the overall structure of the Conference and a significant amount of time is spent explaining the “Why” of the Conference.

In simpler terms, in terms of EU initiatives in the last 12 months, everyone we speak to will have heard about the EU Digital Covid Certificate but very few will have heard about the Conference before being asked by us to participate. Feedback received after events has included queries about

the discussions that they have participated in actually change anything? Are there any commitments on what is going to happen to these conversations and what will happen next?

These are more difficult questions to answer as the overall timeline and what happens next is unclear. This is seen as a significant issue by participants who have engaged with events to date.



# ITALY

## General information/approach:

The Italian Government strongly supports the Conference on the Future of Europe, hoping that it will bring up proposals for changes in the areas that matter most to the European citizens.

A wide array of **events (seminars, debates and discussion panels)** - with a special focus on youth - have already taken place and will take place in the next months throughout Italy, in order to reach as many citizens as possible, also thanks to the active support of local authorities.

The Italian Government is also committed to raise as much as possible the awareness on the Conference **through a promotional campaign** already ongoing via websites and social media of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the European Affairs Department of the Prime Minister's Office.

Furthermore, **a broader media campaign will last until the end of the Conference, involving** all media, both classic ones such as TV and radio (where commercials will be broadcasted), and new media - social and internet, so as to reach as much as possible the youth. The aim is to promote the initiative and above all the multilingual platform as main hub to collect and convey contributions and ideas.

## Overview of main national events and initiatives:

- **EU-Balkan Youth forum, 22-26 November 2021** (Rome), aimed at involving young people from the Western Balkans in the debate on the future of the EU, to keep alive the perspective of their joining the EU
- **Med Dialogues – Youth forum, 2-4 December 2021 (Rome)**, aimed at engaging young people from the Southern Neighbourhood countries, with a focus on climate transition
- **High-level event co-chaired by the two Italian representatives to the CoFE, 9 December 2021** (Rome)
- (Four) national panels in the next months throughout Italy
- **“Let's meet in... to talk about the future of Europe”:**  
This series of events will take place in **10 Italian cities, from December until spring 2022**, with the aim of stimulating citizens to participate in the Conference on the future of Europe. Each stage will be an opportunity to explore one or more topics among the nine proposed on the multilingual platform, taking into account the specificities and requests of the territory. The first appointment, in Venice on 2 December 2021, is dedicated to 'The EU in the world' and 'Climate change and the environment'.  
The event is divided into a first session of debate open to citizens and students, with representatives of local authorities, universities, civil society. A workshop with the students will follow, which will end up with the presentation of a paper that will be uploaded on the multilingual digital platform.

After Venice, "Let's meet in..." will take place in Milan, Naples, Turin, Ventotene, Lecce, Catania, Bologna, Teramo and Florence.

- Venice - 2 December 2021
  - Milan – 20 January 2022
  - Naples – 11 February 2022
  - Lecce – 11 March 2022
  - Parma – March 2022
  - Catania – March 2022
  - Teramo – April 2022
  - Ventotene – 9 May 2022
  - Rome- closing event – June 2022.
- “**Live chats** with students and teachers on the themes of the Conference on the Future of Europe”
  - Two contests, one for **secondary school students** ("Europe is in your hands!") and another for **university students** in Italy.

**Secondary school students** have been asked to represent their vision of the EU from the point of view of those who were “born European” and want to share their ideas creatively to their peers. Their production must be inspired by one of the nine main themes of the Conference. They can choose between:

- a **power point presentation** of a maximum of 6 pages or slides;
- a **video** with a maximum duration of 3 minutes made with a smartphone, video camera, video editing software that is deemed most appropriate;
- a **content for social media channels** (Facebook and Instagram).

The **University student contest** - "**University 4 EU - Your future, our Europe**", is aimed at promoting debates and meetings on the territory, relating to one or more of the themes of the digital platform. A wide margin of choice will be left to Universities regarding the type of initiative provided that, **together with the students, citizens and civil society are involved**.

## LATVIA

**Main principles of communication:** close collaboration since Day 1 between all stakeholders, mainly: MFA, EC representation, EP Office and NGOs. Multiplication effect achieved by sharing information of main CoFE-related events in Latvia by all stakeholders.

**Approaches used to attract audience:** communication strategy applied depends on the target audience:

Events that are targeted at younger, more tech-savvy, have been promoted mainly through social media platforms. Most of these events were held on-line, foreseeing interaction via chat boxes or special on-line interaction platforms, e.g., sli.do.

Events that were aimed at people age 55+ (e.g., 15 regional discussions for people aged 55+) requested different, more conventional approach: posters, mouth-to-mouth information spreading (e.g., the events took place in regional libraries, hence, librarians drew visitors' attention to the event, invited them to participate, reminded them as the event was approaching etc.), direct calling to those, who registered their interest in the event.

**Target groups:** Special attention has been devoted to young people, in line with the general principles of CoFE. Apart from that efforts have been made to involve people that are normally harder to reach: people living in regions, elderly people and people whose mother tongue is other than Latvian.

**What has worked well:** although information about the Conference and related events can be found on various sources, conveniently a Monthly Outlook with short information on past events and, more importantly, upcoming events organized by all stakeholders is sent out to broad list of recipients each month. Information on all events held in Latvia can be found in one place: <http://www.esmaja.lv/lv/aktualitates/konference-par-eiropas-nakotni-pasakumu-grafiks> making it easy for people interested in these events to navigate.

Furthermore, hashtags are widely used (in Latvian: “#NākotnePiederTev”) has been added to all social media content related to CoFE, making it easier for followers to understand and associate the event with the Conference.

Last but not least, – most of the events are live-streamed, making them accessible to people irrespective of their place of residence, as well as Covid-19 situation. Interaction options (chat boxes and/or sli.do) make them more appealing to those wishing to express their ideas or views. People are actively using these options and are engaging in discussions.

**Material usage:** To ensure uniformity, proposed hashtags have been widely applied. Apart from that, materials for each event are mainly nationally-produced to match the needs of the particular event or audience.

**Feedback:** In general people have shown interest in the Conference. What we have observed, **people are more interested in issues that are directly connected with their welfare and sense of security**, e.g., economic recovery, accessibility of services and health care, infrastructure, defense of external borders, disinformation, **not EU-level interinstitutional issues**. We believe it is of utmost importance for the Plenary to take it into consideration in order to maintain credibility of the process. Specific feedback regarding communication have not been received.

# LITHUANIA

## General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE

- Communication strategy is decentralized. From the very beginning, Lithuania MFA implemented a communication strategy based on digital communication campaigns on social media, a series of physical events in regions, work with schools, regular informal briefings for NGOs, youth organizations, etc. In parallel, other stakeholders carry out their own separate communication actions. Lithuania Ministry of Foreign Affairs communication actions
- Social media. Still ongoing social media campaign aims to reach 2 goals: 1) Raise awareness about CoFE in general 2) Increase usage of MDP within Lithuanian population. Until the end of 2021 we will run 3 videos with well recognizable personalities promoting citizens to take part in the CoFE by sharing their ideas in the MDP. More consistent campaign to promote the MDP is planned too.
- Work with other stakeholders. We regularly organize meetings with the leading NGOs, associations and schools. We have also sent a request for municipalities to upload a poster with the link to the MDP in their websites.
- Town hall meetings. Our vice minister occasionally has meetings (online and physical) with diverse social groups (students, pupils, seniors, NGOs, local authorities, etc). Each meeting starts as a discussion on the future of Europe, then the audience is encouraged to take part in CoFE's activities and is updated about the process.

## Lessons learned

- In terms of national events, cooperation with local social partners is a key. People have more interest in events if they are a recognizable, local person among organizers.
- Majority of participants were hesitant to express their opinion, therefore, discussions with smaller groups or opportunity to write down their ideas in special questionnaires were needed.
- Speaking about communication, simple messages conveyed by clear visuals generated the biggest engagements with Facebook posts.
- Direct communication with NGOs, youth organizations paid off.

- Hashtag #Futureisinyourhands works, because not only MFA or EC representation use it, but social partners too.

## **EU-made communication versus nationally produced materials**

We use a logo, a slogan (Future is in your hands), some visuals and videos. However, nationally produced materials are used more, because we could adapt it to our audience.

## **The targeted audiences**

Youth is a target group. The majority of our activities are for pupils, students and young people in general. In terms of events, our target group is people who live in regions and who are not usually involved in such initiatives.

## **About the feedback**

- Our audience has a positive attitude towards CoFE. Citizens, who participate in our events, use this opportunity to speak up about issues that concern them.
- We do not receive any specific comments on communication in particular. People who are involved said that information and communication is sufficient. The problem is that although they are quite informed they still are somehow hesitant to take action (register an idea/event).
- Reason behind this could be not coherent communication. For some of our partners it is still not clear what will be an outcome of the CoFE, what is a benefit of the process, whether it will not end without a clear change.
- In the beginning, a big part of our social partners was somewhat skeptical regarding the MDP as the main tool of the CoFE. We heard opinions that the MDP is hard to use, it seems incomplete, youth's representatives said that young people do not tend to register on websites, write comments and express their opinion under their real names

## LUXEMBOURG

- Luxembourg has adopted a pro-active and inclusive approach to inform and promote the Conference on the future of Europe (CoFE), notably by setting up a dedicated section about the conference on the government website, available in all three administrative languages (French, German, Luxembourgish) and English. To facilitate public participation, the government website actively promotes the conference's multilingual digital platform and contains links to events organised by various stakeholders at the national level.
- This multilingual approach aims to ensure that as many people as possible from various age groups as well as from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds are given the opportunity to inform themselves about and participate in the CoFE.
- In efforts to promote national events at a larger scale and increase public outreach, the Luxembourg government cooperates closely with the national Parliament as well as the Representations of the European Commission and European Parliament in Luxembourg.

In this context, events are announced through different communication channels, including a multilingual advertising campaign on various billboards across the country. Various stakeholders are also actively promoting specific events through traditional media (newspapers, radio stations) as well as through extensive social media outreach.

- In all of these communication efforts, citizens are encouraged to express and exchange their ideas and expectations for the future of Europe.
- Finally, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs regularly puts the conference on the agenda of the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of European Policy (CICPE), which brings together senior officials from the ministries dealing with European affairs

## MALTA

### **General information on past, current and future communication actions and strategies on CoFE**

Malta has adopted a bottom-up approach in all communications on the Conference. This is being achieved by roping in different stakeholders to try to reach a wide range of audiences. Several of the events organised within the Conference included the participation of the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary and within the Office of the Prime Minister. This has helped to raise the profile of the Conference on a national level.

The following is a list of events organised to promote the conference:

- Official launch involving senior level of Government
- Consultation sessions on the future of education
- Public dialogues on specific topics such as health, migration, the future of work and the European way of life
- Sessions with school children during government-run summer school
- Regular engagement with civil society organisations, European Commission Representation in Malta and the European Parliament Liaison Office
- Social media campaigns and articles on local newspapers to increase outreach by promoting the use of the Multilingual Digital Platform and to encourage participation in events.

The outcomes of all the events organised were summarised and uploaded on the Multilingual Digital Platform.

### **Lessons learned - what has worked well, in your experience?**

- Having focused discussions helped to generate more concrete ideas which were easier to present on the MLDP.
- Once citizens are roped in the discussions, there is a genuine interest by citizens to share their views and engage in the conversation.



**Have you used EU-made communication assets or rather your own nationally-produced materials?**

The MT Coordinating Committee is using the visibility package of the Common Secretariat for all communication material related to the Conference.

**Which audiences have you targeted with predilection?**

Most of the efforts have been focused on consulting with younger citizens, such as youth and also schoolchildren, as well as roping in citizens who are not usually involved in the discussions on EU-related topics.

**What feedback have you received from audiences regarding CoFE in general, and communication on it in particular?**

- There needs to be more clarity on how the outcomes of the Conference will lead to concrete actions.
- How will all the ideas generated on the platform be gathered and formulated into proposals.
- Certain fatigue or lack of interest amongst citizens to discuss issues related to the EU, unless such issues impact them directly.

## NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has a comprehensive campaign to involve citizens in the Conference - and the discussion - on the future of Europe. The Netherlands uses all the usual means (such as social media, articles on government websites etc.) to involve citizens, but also goes a few steps further to reach citizens.

Central to this are the citizens' dialogues and the *Visions of Europe* campaign, with its own website ([www.kijkopeuropa.nl](http://www.kijkopeuropa.nl)) separate from existing government websites. Here, citizens can find information about the Conference and the opportunities, both nationally and on the European level, for involvement. *Visions of Europe* combines communication and participation. Citizens not only receive information about the Conference, but they have also been able to directly shape their participation via questionnaires or sign up for dialogues.

To involve harder-to-reach target groups, such as youth, illiterate people, people from certain migrant backgrounds have been involved in the Conference both online and offline (offline dialogues on location). This improves the representativeness and inclusiveness of the involvement of Dutch citizens.

In addition, the Netherlands has a Special Envoy to the Conference, who speaks at various meetings and events about what the Conference can mean to citizens and what the Netherlands is doing in this regard.

Furthermore, dozens of letters were sent out by our line ministries to civil society organizations to make them aware of the Conference, of what the Netherlands is doing and what they can do to become involved in the process of the Conference.

# POLAND

## I. *General approach*

In Poland Conference is seen as a decentralized process, thus priority is given to the citizens and their direct input. In that context it is key to ensure Conference's inclusiveness, also in terms of communication. It concerns the accessibility of information on the Conference and the scope of the Multilingual Digital Platform, the use of social media and creating new websites or adjusting the already existing ones.

The use of social media is important in order to increase the young peoples' engagement, however communication efforts must also consider people at risk of digital exclusion, such as the elderly.

## II. *Communication*

In Poland Conference is promoted on both governmental and regional level:

### ➤ Activity on the national level

Information on the Conference, the Multilingual Digital Platform and events is available on official government's website in both Polish and English (<https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/konferencja-w-sprawie-przyszlosci-europy>), as well as the social media, such as Twitter, Facebook or YouTube. The Government Information Center, which functions within the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, is engaged in communication activities related to the Conference.

The Chancellery organised events with participation of various stakeholders, such as think tanks, non-governmental organisations and universities, for example:

- 23rd of September 2021 – the conference *Is strategic autonomy the right EU response to a changing world?*, during which the Polish position on the concept of the European strategic autonomy was presented, was streamed live on the internet, while the viewers could ask questions on live chat. Moreover, the elements of the discussion were broadcasted live in public media. The video from the event is available on the government's website, as well as the social media.

- 17th of November 2021 - the Chancellery together with the European Commission Representation in Poland organised the National Debate on the future of Europe. Polish Minister for European Union Affairs, Konrad Szymański, and European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, also participated. In order to ensure a representative group of participants, they were selected from the Polish civil society on the basis of criteria, such as: age, gender, education, profession and place of residence. The outcomes of thematic discussions, as well as the video from the event, were published on the government's website and the social media.

Polish Minister for European Union Affairs also participates in debates organised by think tanks and NGOs.

Conference visibility is also ensured thanks to the subcommittee on the Conference established within the Polish Sejm. Its discussions, which often include external experts and analysts on the relevant field, are streamed live on the parliamentary website.

➤ Activity on the regional level

On the regional level Conference is promoted on the social media and websites by the Regional Centers for International Debate – each Center declared readiness to organise at least two Conference related events until the end of 2021 in all 16 regions of Poland.

➤ Visual identity

Poland uses the EU communication materials, such as the Conference logo, however the Government Information Center also creates own visual materials for the purposes of promotion of the Conference and national events.

# PORTUGAL

## National experience

- **Establishment of an institutional partnership** with the National Assembly, the office of the European Parliament and the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal, the national Economic and Social Council, the National Association of Municipalities, and the National Youth Council, resulting in the organisation of nine decentralised national events;
- **The holding of high-profile events during the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council**, with guests such as European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights (at the margins of the Porto Social Summit in May 2021) and the Conference's Co-Chairs (in the first European Citizens' Event in June 2021).

## Communication strategy

- **Online resources investment:** total focus on the Multilingual Digital Platform, with an assisting dedicated webpage on the website of the *Jacques Delors Centre for European Information*, as well as regular broadcast of information in the Centre's monthly newsletter and on social media posts;
- **Main target audiences:**
  - **The youth** (through schools, universities and youth organizations);
  - **"Multipliers"** (civil society representatives, such as trade unions, NGOs and sectoral associations).

These audiences have gone on to organize Conference-related events on their own.

## Key takeaways

- High-profile events have resulted in significant publicity;
- However, the lack of access to conventional media has limited the reach to the wider audience.

## ROMANIA

Institutional communication (Romanian MFA in lead) aims at triggering the promotion of the Conference on the Future of Europe by its partners, by other organisations and citizens.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its partners (the European Institute in Romania, the Romanian Diplomatic Institute) organised a series of dedicated events, aiming at promoting the Conference. Moreover, the engagement with youth organisations also had at its core the objective of promoting the Conference, communicating over its objectives and possibilities of participation (e.g. contributing ideas on the digital platform, participation in events etc.). In order to further sensitise the youth in relation to the Conference, major universities were informed about the ongoing debates on the Future of Europe, with the recommendation of sharing the information with their students and affiliated young professionals and researchers.

Several articles and interviews by Romanian senior officials addressed and integrated comprehensive information about the Conference, explaining in particular the importance of citizens' active participation in the events dedicated to the future of Europe.

To date, there are two takeaways from the communication exercise on the Conference. Firstly, most interested to participate in the discussions on the future of Europe proved to be those already having a vested interest in Europe or those following regularly the news about the European Union and European affairs. A second lesson concerns the impact of the public agenda on communication. In general terms, we might say that, independent from the intensity of communication, the public interest in the Conference diminished at the peak of the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the Covid pandemic (October-November). This was very visible in the context of the events organized. Consequently, although a relevant process for the citizens, the Conference was seen as secondary to policy decisions on health, education, organisation of work in the context of Covid pandemic management.

# SLOVAKIA



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

### Conference on the Future of Europe in Slovakia - communication



### Information Campaign (March – June 2021)

#### Special media EurActiv campaign



#### Official launch of CoFoE in Slovakia





## Addressing cities and municipalities inviting them to participate in CoFoe



## Press conference introducing CoFoe



## Road Show (visiting 25 cities in the last week of August)

### Advertising Road Show on TV morning show



### Public discussion in city centre





## Social media campaign

### What do you like about the EU?



### #GoodQuestion

Toto je #DobraOtazka - položil nám ju Simon v rozhovore na Roadshow.  
Informácií je veľa a je ľahké sa v nich stratiť. Preto sme hľadali priamo pri zdroji, teda v údajoch Ministerstva vnútra, pod ktoré spadá aj udeľovanie ... See more



### Work of Slovaks in EU



## Back to School



## Lessons learned (+feedback)

### What worked well

- **“Hands on” approach**  
(in schools with students, with citizens in city centres)
- **Social media campaign on EU**
- **Use of influencers**  
(as a complementary communication tool)

### What did not work well

- **Media interest in CoFoE**  
(questions after the press conference not related to CoFoE or EU)
- **Public interest in CoFoE**  
(ads on facebook and other websites - very low interaction rate (2,27%) in comparison to ad impressions)

## SLOVENIA

The Slovenian Government decided to actively promote CoFoE and encourage the civil society to organize the CoFoE related national citizen's panels, register them on the digital platform and publish the recommendations to the plenary. Main communication regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe was focused on social media accounts of the MFA Slovenia and Slovenian Presidency (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). At the MFA Slovenia we have also prepared announcements for the Slovenian Presidency website for each European Citizens Panel with link to the main CoFoE website and to the digital multilingual CoFoE platform.

Communications on MFA Slovenia social media accounts was mostly dedicated to Slovenian citizens. And as current EU Council Presidency we also communicated about the CoFoE events and achievements on social media accounts of the Slovenian Presidency. At the centre of communication regarding the CoFoE on Twitter and Facebook profiles was European Citizens Panels and the activities of the State Secretary Gašper Dovžan, who is also a member of the Conference on the Future of Europe Executive Board. Communication on Instagram was more interactive, for example we prepared quiz about the meaning of CoFoE, citizens involvement, multilingual platform, main topic that were discussed on panels etc. Quiz had also links to the official CoFoE website. For social media communication we used EU-made communication assets and our own graphics and videos.

Slovenian Government also made an official website for Slovenian citizens with an invitation for active participation in the CoFoE discussion on EU level.

### **Key messages:**

The Slovenian Government used key messages from the Communication Plan on the Conference on the Future of Europe and from the Slovenian Presidency Programme. The CoFoE is one of 4 main Slovenian Presidency priorities. Most of the CoFoE discussion were also held during our presidency. The emphasis on all messages was on the role of the EU citizens in CoFoE and the importance of citizens engagement in a debate on the future of Europe.

## **Central CoFoE event on national level:**

Slovenian Government dedicated its traditional annual event on high political level "Bled Strategic Forum", which took place on 1 and 2 September in Slovenia, entirely to the CoFoE. Over 20 panels on BSF held debated on possible strategic approach to common challenges. The debates reached beyond the framework of the member states, because of the Western Balkans representatives in the discussion as well as guest from Eastern partnership countries.

This year's young BSF, which took place on 31 August and 1 September was also dedicated to the future of Europe. Young leaders had the opportunity to share their creativity and ideas for their engagement on the EU level. They discussed on how to address identified challenges and **the solutions needed to guarantee that young Europeans truly are the future of Europe.**

Other CoFoE related events: Virtual debate on the role and impact of different dynamics of the integration processes on the stability of the EU; "Postpandemic future – Between Necessary Green and Inevitably Digitized Europe"; event of the Slovenian National Assembly – Between Supranational Constitutionalisation and Subsidiarity etc.

## **Media coverage:**

Before and during our presidency to the Council of the EU we provided the Slovenian media with relevant information regarding the CoFoE (National Radio and Television, main Slovenian newspaper DELO and Slovenian Press Agency). Slovenian National Television has dedicated its foreign policy broadcast called Globus entirely to the CoFoE and later to the Slovenian Presidency, where State Secretary Dovžan talked about the CoFoE.

## **Best practices:**

At the MFA Slovenia we identified several best practices regarding the communication on CoFoE, for example as are: using SoMe platforms that are close to young people, (quizzes and questions on Instagram) and being consistent in the image and key messages; using #CoFoE hashtag for quick visibility and reach; promoting a main national event through several SoMe accounts (MFA Slovenia, EU2021SI and BSF); cooperating with media representatives and providing them relevant information and content and posting short videos on SoMe and using picture quotes.



## SPAIN

The Prime Minister's Office has launched a comprehensive program of events related to the Future of Europe. Such events are outlined on the PMO's website, using the Conference's logo.

Furthermore, EU's State Secretariat has presented a national framework of events and has organized 6 national level seminars where the Future of Europe has been discussed. The following topics have been touched upon:

- The role of the EU in the world.
- The role of regions in the governance of Europe.
- How to foster European citizenship.
- Intergenerational agreement (youth and elderly people related challenges).

Two of such national events took place in cooperation with other member countries: Portugal on the subject of transborder cooperation (*Alto Alentejo* and *Extremadura*) and the Netherlands on the topic of strategic autonomy.

Simultaneously, Spanish Autonomous Regions together with the Foreign Affairs Ministry, have organized more than 20 events on a wide variety of topics. All the events can be found and accessed through the FA Ministry's website. At all times, active citizen participation was sought after, involving young people and collaborating closely with Think Tanks, universities, regional and local authorities, and national and regional parliaments.

Like the PMO, both the Ministry and local authorities have informed about the events at their respective websites, using the Conference's logo. In this regard, the Conference was advertised on national and regional media, including National TV (TVE). Despite such publicity, so far, the Conference has attracted limited interest from the broad public.

From the Ministry, our action focus has been as follows:

- We have aimed for a decentralized debate, involving citizens from every corner of the country;
- We have leveraged on persuasive communication material (infographics, logos, info on how to organize events and how to participate...) drafted in Spain and in the EU; and
- We have reached out to people familiar with internet and new technologies and normally interested in EU affairs.

As a way forward, the conclusions reached at these events have been made available at the Digital Platform. This information will be used: (i) to prepare the Spanish national contribution to the Conference; and (ii) will inspire the agenda of the next Spanish Presidency of the Council that will occur during the second half of 2023.

As a final remark, it must be noted that people that have actually attended these events, have actively taken part in them by sharing their priorities and ideas. Now, the challenge faced is how to convey these priorities on a European level. On the one hand, the Digital Platform is not very user friendly and is currently only being used by about 200,000 people, which represents less than 0.05 % of European citizens. On the other hand, Plenaries are too formal and allow a very limited interaction or participation with/by citizens. Bearing all that in mind, we could say that there is significant room for improvement with regards to citizen engagement.

# SWEDEN

Sweden maintains a decentralized approach in implementing the Conference on the Future of Europe. In order to maintain a bottom-up approach, the government has aimed to mobilize national parliament, political parties, social partners, local- and regional representatives, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

## Approach and Initiatives

- In order to drive the process forward in Sweden, the government organizes consultations with the above-mentioned stakeholders to inform and guide their participation in the Conference as well as to collect feedback from them on policy issues.
- There has been a special focus on young people. The minister of EU affairs visits high schools and universities all over Sweden to engage in dialogue about Europe's future with students. Sweden's national representative to the plenary is a representative of the National Youth Council.
- The government primarily uses digital media to spread information about the conference: LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and a government website. The minister of EU affairs has also participated in several town square meetings where local press has written about his presence but also his messages concerning the conference.
- The government offices have produced their infographic to better reach the Swedish public. This is distributed to the different stakeholders for their use in events and social media. Posters have been printed of this along with the posters produced by the common secretariat and are used in town square meetings and other events that the government participates in.
- Our impression is that knowledge of the conference is not widespread and participation rates in Sweden are still low. At the same time, many key stakeholder organizations are engaging in the conference through the digital platform. Many do, however, voice the need for the digital platform to be more user-friendly and accessible.



- A key criticism is that citizens and stakeholders have a hard time understanding the concept of the conference and what it will result in. Sweden believe that it has helped to focus on the added value of engaging in a dialogue about Europe's future as being a key message that has helped increase participation.
  - Coordinated advertising by the common secretariat in all member countries would be useful to increase the engagement of citizens.
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