

**Flash report of the first meeting of the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe
24 March 2021, 17.00 -19.00 – Brussels (Council - Europa building)**

Participants:

Co-chairs of the Executive Board: Portuguese Secretary of State for EU Affairs Ana Paula Zacarias, Vice-President Dubravka Šuica and MEP Guy Verhofstadt (RENEW/BE)

Representatives of the Executive Board: Slovenian Secretary of State for EU Affairs Gasper Dovzan, French Minister of State for EU Affairs Clément Beaune, Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and Vice-President Věra Jourová, MEP Manfred Weber (EPP/DE), MEP Iratxe García Pérez (S&D/ES).

Observers: Czech State Secretary for EU Affairs Milena Hrdinková, Swedish Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren, Spanish Secretary of State for the EU Juan González-Barba Pera, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Sophie Wilmès (excused), MEP Gerolf Annemans (ID/BE), MEP Daniel Freund (Greens/EFA/DE), MEP Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR/PL) and MEP Helmut Scholz (The Left/DE)

COSAC observers: COSAC represented by the chairman of the Committee on European Union questions of the German Bundesrat, Guido Wolf, the chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the German Bundestag, Gunther Krichbaum, the chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Portuguese Assembleia da Republica, Luís Capoulas Santos, the chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Slovenian Državni zbor, Marko Pogačnik and the chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Slovenian Državni svet Bojan Kekec.

Invited observers: Committee of the Regions (represented by President Apostolos Tzitzikostas), the European Economic and Social Committee (represented by President Christa Schweng), BusinessEurope (represented by Director General Markus Beyrer) and ETUC (represented by Secretary General Luca Visentini)

Summary:

The Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe held its first and constitutive meeting on 24 March 2021 in the Council (in hybrid format). The Executive Board will oversee the work, process and organisation of the Conference. This first meeting took place in a constructive and positive atmosphere and was co-chaired by Secretary of State for EU Affairs Ana Paula Zacarias, Vice-President Dubravka Šuica and MEP Guy Verhofstadt. Participants confirmed their commitment to an inclusive and transparent collaboration to make the Conference a success and underlined that the Executive Board must act as a single entity. The Executive Board took first steps to make sure that citizens can soon start to contribute to the Conference, in particular on the multilingual Digital Platform, including the Charter for citizens' participation and the visual identity. The Board discussed the possibility of a formal event on 9 May in Strasbourg as well as a first Conference Plenary on 10 May (depending on restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). It also held an exchange of views on its internal working methods and the working methods of the Plenary. The next meeting of the Executive Board is planned for 7 April 2021.

Details:

Representatives and observers took the floor for an introductory exchange of views and confirmed their commitment to listen to citizens and make the Conference a success. They underlined the unique interinstitutional nature of the process, the need to put citizens in the centre and to ensure follow up, as well as to be ready to also hear different views.

The Commission, on behalf of the three institutions, presented the multilingual digital platform as well as the visual identity. The platform is an interactive tool and the digital hub for the Conference, it is the single place for citizens to find all information related to the Conference, share ideas and the place to collect the input from a multitude of events. It will allow all data to be analysed, monitored and published. The platform was very well received by participants and its swift launch was supported by all. Questions related to the list of topics (issues such as migration, social dimension or economic policy to be addressed more explicitly in headings) and to some of the functionalities of the platform, including the use of languages. Ahead of the next Executive Board meeting suggestions will be made to the Board to address the concerns on the topics, with a view to endorse the launch of the platform for 19 April 2021. The decision on the

visual identity is left to the Common Secretariat, with the support of the respective Communication services.

The Executive Board briefly discussed elements to be addressed in the working methods of the Plenary and the Executive Board and the possibility of a formal event on 9 May in Strasbourg as well as a first Conference Plenary on 10 May (depending on restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Draft working methods for the Plenary and the Executive Board will be prepared by the Common Secretariat with a view to their endorsement at the next meeting of the Executive Board.

The next meeting of the Executive Board is planned for 7 April 2021.

Joint press release:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210324IPR00701/work-begins-on-the-conference-on-the-future--of-europe>

https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48965/210324_cofoe_jointip_final2.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_1401