[Article – Future of Europe: debate on reforming the EU](#)

The need for change

Throughout its existence the EU has always evolved in response to a constantly changing world. The most recent major change was the [Lisbon treaty](#), which gave the Parliament [new law-making powers](#).

However, the process never ends. In recent years there have been increasing calls for another institutional reform in response to developments such as the [digital economy](#), [climate change](#), [migration](#) and [terrorism](#) . These are challenges on a global level which require an international approach. Reforming the EU could make the institutions more flexible and able to respond quicker while facilitating cooperation between member states In addition [Brexit](#) – the UK's decision to withdraw from the EU – has stressed the need to relaunch the EU in order to make it more democratic and more relevant to people.

The EU has now launched the Conference on the future of Europe initiative to see how the EU should evolve to best meet new challenges. However, in previous years the European Parliament and the Commission were already involved in initiatives to explore different ideas.

Conference on the future of Europe

The Conference on the future of Europe is a new initiative looking at what legal changes are needed to better prepare the EU for the future. It is

expected to run for two years, involving a cross-section of society to give people the chance to contribute.

Citizens have to be at the core of discussions on how to reform the EU, MEPs said in a [resolution](#) adopted on 15 January, setting out their vision for the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#).

Parliament is the first of the three main EU institutions to adopt a position on the set-up and scope of the upcoming Conference. Negotiations with the Commission and the European Council should be concluded in time for the Conference to be launched on Europe Day 2020 (9 May) and run until summer 2022.

What the European Parliament has proposed

Over the last few years Parliament has been reflecting on the changes that are needed to prepare the EU for the future. As part of one initiative EU heads of state and government were invited to the Parliament to discuss their plans for the EU's future with MEPs.

In addition MEPs adopted three reports in February 2017 setting out how they believe the EU needs to be reformed in order to boost its capacity to act, restore people's trust and make the economy more resilient.

The report by Mercedes Bresso (S&D, Italy) and Elmar Brok (EPP, Germany) looked at what improvements are already possible using the existing system.