

Conference on the Europe's future can only succeed by going beyond Brussels and capitals and involving local communities



□□ A local dialogue in Strasbourg marked today the territorial dimension of the Conference and highlighted that regional and local authorities are key to bring it beyond Brussels and capitals. Participants endorsed an open letter addressed to all local leaders inviting them to organise local dialogues and join a network of Regional and Local EU Councillors launched by the CoR.

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□ **President of the European Committee of the Regions Apostolos Tzitzikostas** , said: *" We need to relaunch the European project by enhancing its democratic functioning. I see our 'House of European Democracy' as having solid foundations – the regional and local authorities – strong walls – the member states – and a protective roof – the EU. The Conference offers a unique opportunity to strengthen it, but can only work if it goes beyond Brussels and the capitals. Local and Regional authorities are the best allies the Union could have to make the Conference a success. Now more than ever, we must seize this opportunity to restart and bring together Europe closer to its people ."*

Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and Demography Dubravka Šuica , said: *"Through the European Committee of the Regions, we see how local and regional authorities are strengthening our democracy. The Conference's success will be measured on the tangible results that we will deliver collectively. Regions, mayors and cities are closest to citizens, and hence you are key to making the Conference on the Future of Europe a success."*

MEP and Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the Conference on the Future of Europe Guy Verhofstadt , said:

"We want to create real momentum from the bottom up. The Conference will be much more than a listening exercise, but a way to truly include citizens in mapping out our shared European future. The foundations have been laid: digital and deliberative democratic experiments that have never been tried on an EU-wide scale. We, representative institutions, will then guarantee that their concerns and proposals will then get a political answer. It's new and exciting, and it starts today!"

Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs Ana Paula Zacarias said: *" As Alexis de Tocqueville once said: "Local assemblies (...) constitute the strength of free nations." This shows the relevance of bringing regional and*

local authorities to the core of the Conference on the Future of Europe. They are the ones closer to the citizens and can help us in reaching out to those that normally do not participate and express their opinions”.

CoR First -Vice President Vasco Cordeiro said :*“The message of today’s representatives of cities and regions is clear: we accept the challenge to help our Union to do better for our citizens. Europe is an ambitious project. Accountability and trust are key to achieve this ambition. During and after the Conference on the future of the Europe, we have to say what we do with what people tell us. This Conference is not about EU institutions. It is about us, the people of Europe!”*

The European Committee of the Regions commits to engage in the Conference on the Future of Europe in many ways:

- The CoR is represented in the Executive Board of the Conference. In this body, it is working to include elected representatives from regional and local parliaments and councils, next to representatives from the European Parliament and the national Parliaments, in the Conference Plenary.
- The CoR is organising a series of local dialogues in the different Members States to reach as many citizens as possible right where they live.
- The CoR will organise a series of debates in its plenary sessions on the functioning of European democracy throughout the duration of the Conference.
- The CoR partners with the [High Level Group on European Democracy](#) , an independent advisory body of seven wise men and women whose mission is to support the CoR’s political and institutional role by providing strategic political analysis, focusing on the challenges for local and regional authorities
- The CoR will launch on 12 May a [cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation](#) to make cities’ and regions’ voices heard throughout the Conference on the Future of Europe with **Innovative participatory processes** and online tools will be used to host citizens’ panels and provide input as well as recommendations for the final report of the Conference expected on local dialogues in Spring 2022.

Useful links:

[President Tzitzikostas’ speech](#)

[Open letter “Let’s engage with the Conference on the Future of Europa and beyond!”](#)

[Recording of the 9 May local dialogue](#)

[CoR citizens survey to contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe](#)

New CoR Mobile App with news and updates from the voice of regions and cities only body representing Europe’s one million local politicians. Available now for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#) .

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