

Press release – Citizens to be the cornerstone of the Conference on the Future of Europe



Following a debate with Dubravka Šuica, Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography and Nikolina Brnjac, representing the Croatian Presidency of the Council, Parliament adopted a resolution setting out its vision for the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe with 494 votes for, 147 against and 49 abstentions.

Putting citizens at the centre of the debate

MEPs want citizens to be at the core of broad discussions on how to tackle internal and external challenges that were not foreseen at the time of the Lisbon Treaty. People of all backgrounds, civil society representatives and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level must be involved in setting the EU's priorities in line with citizens' concerns in a bottom-up, transparent, inclusive, participatory and well-balanced approach.

Parliament proposes establishing several Citizens' Agoras (thematic fora of citizen representatives chosen randomly in line with proportionality and representativeness criteria), and at least two Youth Agoras, each comprising 200-300 citizens with a minimum of three per member state. Citizen representatives will discuss Agora conclusions at the Conference Plenary with

MEPs and national parliament representatives, Council ministers, Commission Vice-Presidents and representatives of other EU institutions, bodies and social partners.

Institutional commitment

In addition to high-level support from the presidents of the three main EU institutions, Parliament urges Council and Commission to commit to the possibility of treaty change. The adopted text also underlines that a permanent mechanism to engage citizens should be considered.

Quote

Parliament's President David Sassoli stated at the beginning of the debate that "we need to review all mechanisms of democratic governance following on from the European elections. This should be done in conjunction with national institutions and with the involvement of the citizens of Europe. We are ushering in a new era of reforms."

You can catch up with the debate here:

[Opening statements by Nikolina Brnjac on behalf of the Croatian Presidency and by Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the EC for Democracy and Demography](#)

[Statement by EP President David Sassoli, followed by MEPs' debate \(1st part\)](#)

[MEPs' debate \(2nd part\)](#)

[MEPs' debate \(3rd part\)](#)

[Closing statements by Dubravka Šuica and Nikolina Brnjac](#)

Next steps

Parliament is the first among 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 (May 9) and run until summer 2022.

Background

Parliament's position reflects the most recent survey findings. In the Parlemeter on "[Heeding the Call beyond the Vote](#)" (September 2019), European citizens continued to support a more important role for the Parliament, while data from [the Commission's Standard Eurobarometer \(November 2019, Table 102\)](#) show that 83% of respondents want "EU citizens' voice to be taken into account more on decisions on the future of Europe".