

## COURTESY TRANSLATION

### General Affairs Council of 22 February – Guidance non paper on the conclusions of the Conference on the future of Europe

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The joint declaration approved by the Council on 5 March 2021 foresees that the Conference on the Future of Europe will reach conclusions by spring 2022. The Executive Board shall publish the conclusions adopted by the plenary session of the Conference. The Executive Board will then submit the final report of the Conference to the joint Presidency. **One year to date after its official launch, it is proposed to held the closing event of the Conference on 9 May 2022 in Strasbourg.**

#### **How to draw the conclusions of the plenary**

On the basis of the recommendations of the citizens' panels, and for each thematic working group, the joint secretariat will group the proposals of the panels (European and national) and the ideas of the platform into *clusters* (about 5-7 *clusters* per working group). On the basis of these *clusters*, the chair of the working group and the citizens' spokesperson will be responsible for drafting a proposal including a general objective and one or more associated measures. This first version of the proposals will be discussed in the working groups and during the plenary sessions at the end of March and the beginning of April (back and forth between the working groups and the plenary session) with the aim of producing a list of consolidated proposals to be presented at an additional plenary session on 29-30 April 2022. At this last plenary (agreed at the meeting of the co-chairs on 9 February), the four components of the plenary (Commission, Council, European Parliament and national parliaments) will present a consolidated list of proposals on which they have reached consensus. This list will be submitted for validation to the 108 citizens who are members of the plenary, who will be able to express their agreement or disapproval for each of the proposals. The result of this process will be the conclusions of the plenary. This methodological proposal has been agreed by the three co-chairs of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

#### **Deliverables**

As stated in the Joint Declaration of the Conference, three steps are foreseen. Firstly, the conclusions of the plenary will be handed over to the Joint Presidency at the event on 9 May 2022. The final report drafted by the Executive Board, which includes all the steps and proposals resulting from the Conference, will then be submitted to the Joint Presidency. Finally,

the three Institutions will give their opinions on the measures taken by each of them, in accordance with their competences, to decide on the follow-up to the conclusions of the Conference.

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**1/ In view of this deadline, it is important that the Council establishes a method of coordination to define the guidelines that it will bring, via its representatives, to the plenary assembly of the Conference with a view to drawing up its conclusions.**

In this spirit, the Ministers are invited to share their vision on the method and thematic priorities that should guide the elaboration of the conclusions and the future report of the Conference. In the working groups and in the plenary assembly, the Member States will thus have to establish a common position in order to reach a consensus with the other three components, while keeping the citizens' recommendations as the focus and central point for this consensus. In particular, the Ministers could decide on the usefulness of structuring the thematic priorities around a clear guideline, without prejudice to the cross-cutting nature of the guidelines that will ultimately be adopted by the Conference.

**2/ It is proposed that Member States consolidate their common position on the policy orientations resulting from the recommendations of the panels and the proposals of the working groups in an exchange of views at the informal General Affairs Council on 4 March 2022.**

**3/ Finally, in accordance with the Joint Declaration, it is proposed that the Council has an exchange of views on the process that will follow the delivery of the conclusions and the final report.** The March and April GACs should be used to prepare the 9 May event and the precise process that will follow. After the closing event of the Conference on 9 May, it is proposed that the General Affairs Council should prepare the actual follow-up to the substantive work of the Conference, with a view to the possible adoption of conclusions at the European Council on 23-24 June.

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**In order to better understand the expectations and sensitivities of the Member States, the Ministers are therefore asked to give their opinion on :**

1. The modalities of the Council's consultation up to the 9 May, for the elaboration of the conclusions of the plenary assembly and the definition of a consensus position with the other components, indicating some thematic priorities;

2. The modalities and format of the closing event on 9 May 2022, and the statement of the co-Presidents of the Conference following the delivery of the conclusions of the plenary assembly;
3. The process that should follow, within the Council, the delivery of the conclusions and the final report, and the desired involvement of the other Institutions.

**Discussions will continue at the informal meeting of European Affairs Ministers in Arles (3 and 4 March) and at the GAC on 22 March.** If necessary, a meeting of the directors in charge of European affairs could be convened (by videoconference or in person) between two Council meetings.

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#### **ANNEX: Indicative timetable (to be discussed)**

- 22/02 - February GAC: first global exchange of views (method, calendar)
- 04/03 - Informal meeting of EU affairs ministers: discussion on the first policy orientations resulting from the recommendations of the panels.
- 11-12/03 - Conference plenary session: consideration of the recommendations of panels 1 ("A stronger economy, social justice and employment / Youth, sport, culture and education / Digital transformation") and 4 ("The EU in the world / Immigration").
- 25-26/03 - Plenary Assembly of the Conference: examination of the proposals of the working groups.
- 08-9/040 - Plenary Assembly of the Conference: examination of the proposals of the working groups ;
- 29-30 April: Conference Plenary Assembly: adoption of consolidated proposals;
- 9 May - Closing event, handing over the conclusions of the Conference plenary to the three Co-Presidents of the Conference.
- *Date to be determined: presentation of the final report of the Conference by the Executive Board;*
- *30/05 - GAC of 30 May: discussion on the Council guidelines for the European Council ;*
- *23-24/06 - European Council: possible conclusions.*