THE SPANISH FEDERAL COUNCIL TO THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Based on the interest raised in the last meeting of the Member Council on September 29th around the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) and the role that the International European Movement (EM), and its national sections could have in it, I want, first of all, to report on what we have been doing in the last month regarding CoFoE, as well as the important publication of the book "*The Citizen debate at the Conference on the Future of Europe. 70th anniversary of Schuman's Declaration"* with the foreword by the High Representative, Josep Borrell, which was already commented by *Agence Europe*, on September 21st.

Moreover, we want to inform you, in this letter, what is the position of the Spanish Federal Council of the European Movement (CFEME) regarding the CoFoE, that has been expressed in various works, and especially in our statement of January 20th, and the public statements of the two Regional Councils of Yuste (6th and 7th of March) and Roncesvalles (28th of August). Therefore, for us the European Conference has a special relevance as we have expressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Spanish Government and different telematic meetings with the EM.

The CFEME starts from recognizing the enormous relevance of the political process that the European Union is undergoing, as the unity between its different institutions showed with the initiative of the European Parliament in its resolutions of April 17, May 15, and especially with the resolution of June 18 about the Europe Conference, the proposal of the European Commission of May 27, and the *Recovery Plan* approved by the European Council on July 21. These measures are addressing the negative health, economic and social effects caused by the pandemic, through the *Recovery Plan* that takes new generations into account.

For this reason, we underline the importance of the *Recovery Plan* approved by the European Council, which in its multiple aspects - health, economic, and social - constitutes an unavoidable reference for the international community as a whole and represents a decisive step in the conformation of "European sovereignty" around the essential value of solidarity. And we consider that progress in European construction requires the immediate inter-institutional statement about the Conference on the Future of Europe during the German presidency, which was postponed for reasons of Covid-19, on May 9, 2020 when it was to be held in Dubrokniv.

We understand that in these new circumstances it is more necessary than ever for organized civil society to participate “on an equal footing” in the Conference on the Future of Europe, where the European Movement has to have a direct participation given its historical legitimacy, long experience and link with European construction. We insist that the new situation in the European Union requires that the Conference on the Future of Europe be open to the reform of the European treaties, in various areas, in order to get the most out of the Recovery Plan approved by the European Council.

We believe that the Conference on the Future of Europe will have to assess the effects caused by the Coronavirus and the limits of the competence system manifested in this area for the future, in order to face the fight against Covid-19 and future challenges pandemics for the new generations of Europeans. In any case, we highlight the importance that the European Union is acquiring in the fight against Covid-19, thus becoming the indispensable actor in the fight and consequently reinforcing its role on the international scene.

We want to insist on the relevance that the new generations of Europeans are very important for the future, as indicated in the *Recovery Plan*, since they will be the main beneficiaries of this plan and will also be the ones who will have to deal with the total return of it before the year 2058. Therefore, they must play an important role in the Conference on the Future of Europe and not only individually but through organized civil society organizations like ours.

In this sense, we want to convey that the CFEME constituted a Youth section a year ago, which is being very active and that, for example, it participated in the COP-25 with Commissioner Frans Timmermans in December 2019, among many other actions. At present, it is proposed to bring together the different youth sections of the different CFEME Regional Councils, at the beginning of next year, in order to work for the participation of CFEME Youth in the Conference on the Future of Europe and to prepare a proposal facing it.

Throughout this summer we have held three face-to-face meetings on the Conference as well as various telematic events. The first, already mentioned above, held in Roncesvalles on 28th, 29th and 30th of August, when we focused on the importance of education and culture as topics that should be included in the CoFoE. Roncesvalles, is one of the places where the cultural roots of Europe come together with the confluence of the *Camino de Santiago* and the *Ruta Carlomagno*. The event was attended by various representatives of the institutions, including the Councilor of Culture of the Government of Navarra.

The second was the summer course entitled "*A Stronger Europe in the World in the Era of Covid-19*", organized in La Línea de la Concepción from 16th to 19th of September, dealing with the subject of Foreign Policy, Security and Defense European countries and where the issue of the impact of the United Kingdom's departure from Gibraltar was also discussed, since it is of great importance to the region. This event was attended by the Secretary of State for Foreign Policy, **Cristina Gallach**, among other authorities. An innovative reflection was produced among the participants, given that it is one of the first face-to-face courses after confinement and where it was possible to highlight the indispensable character of the EU in the fight against covid-19, which is serving to reinforce foreign policy of the Union and European leadership in the world. As a result, we will publish a book soon.

Finally, the event "*The need to advance in regional participation, economic and social cohesion: a view from the Canary Islands*", held in Tenerife, and Las Palmas de Gran Canarias (Canary Islands), where the issue of regionalization and the policy of

connectivity, essential for the region due to its ultra-periphery condition within the EU. In the Canary Islands, we were able to verify the negative effect of the tourism crisis on the islands as well as the very growing increase of illegal immigration and the plans of the local authorities with the help of the Union to face this difficult situation. The events were attended by both the President of the Canary Islands Parliament and the President of the Government of the Canary Islands.

Finally, in the book that we published in June about the Conference on the Future of Europe, the presidents of the French, Italian and German sections of the European Movement participated (Text that we accompany). For the month of December or January 2021, which we hope the Conference has already been convened, we want to make a second book in which we invite all the presidents of the different sections of the International European Movement to participate, including the President of the International European Movement, Eva Maydell.

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