

Interventions from delegates of local and regional authorities at the final plenary of Conference on the Future of Europe



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On 29 and 30 April, the Conference on the Future of Europe Plenary session met for the last time and agreed to a set of 49 proposals which include more than 300 measures on how to achieve them, across 9 topics - from European democracy to climate change via economic growth and jobs,- based on 178 recommendations from the European Citizens' Panels, input from the National Panels and events, and 43 734 contributions on 16 274 ideas recorded on the multilingual digital platform. The representatives of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and representatives from national Parliaments expressed consensus on the proposals. Members of the delegation of local and regional authorities accompanied this process by being present in each working group, by organizing citizens' consultations themselves and by injecting ideas to the multilingual platform, expressed their position on these proposals.

Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), President of the European Committee of the Regions, Head of the delegation of local and regional authorities and member of the working group on European Democracy, stated in his speech: "We see this Conference as a message of hope and it is in our hands to make this hope a reality. Our Union can only survive if our citizens care about it and believe in it. And it is possible only if the EU represents a bottom-up construction, not a top-down one".

"I welcome the existing proposals by the citizens to simplify the EU decision making-process based on subsidiarity and multilevel governance and make EU institutions more understandable. We support the idea to adapt the names of EU institutions to national settings.

In this sense we also suggest adapting the name of the European

Committee of the Regions into European Assembly of regions and municipalities – with a stronger role and in line with the democratic mandate of the 1.2 million directly elected politicians from regions, cities and villages".

He concluded: "This Conference cannot fail. It is essential to commit to its follow-up, so let's commit to a convention that will lead us to a much needed treaty change. Let's make the next European elections a sign of European renewal based on this Conference's results in order to bring Europe closer to its citizens and the new generations".

Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES), 1st CoR Vice President and member of the working on European democracy added: "It is not enough just to invoke the political merit of launching a consultation and dialogue process. Now, the obligation is to follow up. These are not the proposals of citizens or politicians, but they are the proposals of Europeans truly committed to the European Union project."

Muhterem Aras (DE/The Greens) who was member of the working group on climate change and environment, took the floor at the Plenary, stating: "These recommendations must not disappear in a drawer. The responsibility now lies with the EU institutions. They must take a serious look at them. They must communicate transparently which recommendations will be implemented and when. And they must communicate just as transparently why which recommendations cannot be implemented. I am convinced that we need a follow-up and a convention.

Clotilde Armand, Mayor of sector 1 Bucharest and one of the 12 elected representatives from local and regional authorities who was part of the working group on A stronger economy, social justice and jobs, said at the Plenary: "I wish to thank the citizens and EU-institutions for recognising that more than 1 million local and regional leaders are essential partners to build this Union and to keep European democracy strong. By listening to the voices of mayors, law-makers can understand better the reality on the field. [...]Law-makers have an ally with the local community[...]. By working together, we can build a Union that functions better on the ground."

On Europe Day (9 May), the three Co-Chairs of the Executive Board of the Conference will present the final report of the Conference to the Presidents of the EU institutions at a ceremony in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

More information, webstreaming links and pictures can be found here.

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