

Conference on the Future of Europe: launch of the citizens' platform on 19 April

- Invitation to EU citizens: “The future is in your hands”
- Work continues for the launch of the Conference’s digital platform, set for 19 April
- Preparation for an inaugural event on 9 May (Europe Day)



At its meeting on Wednesday, the Executive Board of the Conference on the Future of Europe continued preparations to get the Conference started.

The Executive Board endorsed the multilingual digital platform that will allow citizens from across the EU to contribute to the Conference. It also agreed on its working methods and advanced preparations for the inaugural event on Europe Day (9 May).

An open and inclusive participatory democracy debate

As from 19 April, thanks to this new multilingual digital platform, citizens from across Europe will have the possibility to provide their views on any topic that they consider important for the future of the EU. This will enable citizens – for the first time at EU level – to put forward their ideas, comment on other people’s ideas, create and participate in events. The platform will be the Conference’s central hub, a place where all contributions to the Conference will be brought together and shared, including decentralised events, the European Citizens’ Panels and

Conference Plenaries.

A specialised feedback mechanism will aggregate and analyse key points raised, so that they can also be taken into account during the European Citizens' panels and Conference Plenaries. The platform will also provide information on the Conference's structure and work, as well as resources for event organisers including a catalogue of key events through which they will be able to promote their initiatives at local, regional, national, and European levels. Citizens will easily be able to look up events in which they wish to participate thanks to an events map.

Following the meeting, the co-chairs of the Executive Board stated the following.

The European Parliament's Guy Verhofstadt (RE, BE) said: *"We need to make this discussion as lively as possible, and in times of Covid that means to experiment with digital platforms as much as we can. With this platform, we offer the tools to give everyone a chance to get actively engaged in this debate, and we will make sure these ideas feed into the analysis and conclusions of the Conference. It's their future, so it's their Conference."*

The Portuguese Secretary of State for EU Affairs on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Ana Paula Zacarias, commented that *"The Digital Platform will bring Europeans into the public space. It will allow them to express their concerns, share their dreams and expectations and to engage with their representatives. The Union needs the power of its citizens behind it to make it stronger. This is a decisive moment, and this will allow us to debate differing views frankly and without taboos."*

Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, stated: *"The launch of the Digital Platform in ten days' time will provide a unique space for our citizens to engage in conversations and debates right across Europe. It will allow people to share their ideas, concerns, hopes and dreams – and in all official EU languages. Momentum is now growing and I look forward to seeing the outcome."*

The Conference's official hashtag #TheFutureIsYours is an invitation to EU citizens to contribute and define the EU's future: "The future is in your hands".

Inaugural event on Europe Day

Additionally, the Executive Board made progress in preparing for the Conference's inaugural event on Europe Day (9 May), health conditions permitting. It also adopted the Board's own working methods and held a first discussion on the draft rules for the composition and work of Conference Plenary sessions.

Next steps

The Executive Board will meet again in two weeks, in order to finalise their discussion on the rules of procedure, and to address other prerequisites for the organisation of the Conference.

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