

EMPOWER CITIZENS FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The Civil Society Organizations, indicated below, have signed the following Declaration on the **Rule of Law**, the **Multiannual Financial Framework**, the **European Conference on the Future of Europe** and an **Empower Roadmap**

Taking into account the necessity and urge to have an **aggiornamento of the European Union** and of its adaptation to a more resilient, solidary, just and trustworthy governance; the importance of strengthening the governance capacity at the European level; the necessity of opening a public debate on the future of the Europe more than ten years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, we pledge the following priorities for the European Union:

1. The respect of the Rule of Law and the European democracy.

We call on the creation of an **objective and impartial mechanism** to verify the application of the EU's values by all the Member States and the EU and we support the **enforcement of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)** in Wien and the constitution of an **independent Committee**. We suggest that the power to contest the violation of the Rule of Law should attribute to the **Court of Justice** and introduce the **suspension of a Member State**. We encourage the EU institutions and the Member States to **combat the rising number of governmentally aligned NGOs** and propose **measures to increase independent funding opportunities for CSOs**.

2. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) from 2021 to 2025 and from 2026 to 2030

We welcome the decision of the European Parliament to **freeze the negotiations on MFF** and we ask the European Parliament, the Council and the EU Commission to **re-establish the five-years programming** of the Delors Package-I; to **open a dialogue with CSOs**; to assure that the MFF are **coherent to the SDGs**, the European Green Deal and the Agenda 2030; and to give to the EU its **own resources** and open the way to a complete **co-decision power of the EP**.

3. The Conference on the Future of Europe (and the Citizens' Agora)

About The Conference on the Future of Europe is one of the top priorities of the new Commission chaired by Ursula von der Leyen and is due to start in 2020 and run for maximum two years. We **welcome the meeting of the three European leaders** (David Sassoli, Ursula Von der Leyen and Charles Michel) that will take place at the end of January.

We have renewed calls for a **bottom-up, building-site and free-standing and spontaneously organized events**. We suggest modelling these events on the world-famous **Edinburgh Fringe Festival** (www.worldfringe.com) to mobilize EU citizens ahead of the Future of Europe Conference. We discussed how a **"European Fringe Festival"** – as one model of a Citizens' Agora - would allow citizens to occupy the **"spaces in between"** whatever consultative processes and citizens dialogues emerge from the inter-institutional negotiations. We support the proposal for a **European Fringe Festival** to run in parallel with the formal consultations with civil society and EU citizens within the framework of the Future of Europe Conference itself. It will be a self-organizing series of events that will take place in Rome (January 2020), Turin (May 2020), Prague (22-30 May 2020), Edinburgh (7-31 August 2020), Dublin (7-31 August 2020) and Amsterdam (3-13 September 2020).

The Conference on the Future of Europe should be preceded by a **European Common Declaration of European Nobel Laureates and Youth Movements** and on May 9th, 2020, the Presidents of all EU Institutions should open the Conference to address the transformation of EU. It should open a public space to build the consensus between the representative and the participatory democracy well with a special effort to reach local communities engaging local governments in a coordinated manner.

We suggest that the role of participatory democracy will be played in the framework of deliberative thematic Conventions or Citizens Agora using innovative ways: crowdsources, the participatory budgeting, block- chains, contact groups, cultural and artistic festivals, transnational Platforms. We favor the use of **online platforms** which can reach out to up to 450 million citizens by internet. Such platforms should reach those individuals who are most marginalized and excluded from political influence and the answers of all participating population groups must be given weight according to the demographic structure. Through such online platforms, citizens should be able to prioritize policy challenges in local, regional and macro-regional demographically representative fora linked to Citizens Dialogues.

In **thematic fora at transnational level** and with necessary technical assistance the citizens will develop their own European policy proposals to be presented and seriously discussed and considered in later thematic conference plenaries that take place in different parts of the European Union with MEPs, the European Commission, Mayors and civil society organisations. Both the Committee of Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee will be active in this process. Streaming and participation of citizens should be provided online.

The Conference should be composed by an equal number of EU and national parliamentarian members (54+54) and involve the Commission and the Council on equal footing. A **special session of Interparliamentary meetings** should take place during the German presidency of EU Council in Berlin or in Rome. Representatives of ECB, EESC, Committee of Regions, FRA, Eurojust, Social Partners (ETUC, Business Europe and CEEP) as well as Ombudsman and EU Prosecutor should take an active role in the debates and final decisions.

The Conference will be hosted by the EP and the secretariat will be provided both by the Commission and the EP. The President will be elected by the Conference between the MEPs. No Presidium or Steering Group will be created.

The Conference should respect two main elements of a true public debate:

- the **transnational level** with thematic and not national conferences in the Member States or in the Macro-regions avoiding the “*Brussels speaks to Brussels*”;
- the **transparency and publicity** of all the debates and the conclusions to be taken with a super- qualified majority.

The Conference must be preceded by major proposals and decisions by the EU Institutions on climate change, digitalization, completion of EMU, migration, implementation of the Social Pillar, fight against inequalities and poverty, social market economy, Rule of Law as well as the Electoral Law System and the election of EU leaders. This list means that the Conference shall

not replace the role of EU Institutions and the EU decision-making in the development of the common policies. The Conference will be a unique opportunity to tackle **six key issues** on:

- the division of responsibilities at all the levels from the local to the European;
- the fiscal capacity of the EU and the dimension of the European (federal) budget;
- the achievement of SDGs;
- the role of EU in a globalized and instable world;
- the political and institutional boundaries of EU and the relationship with the neighboring countries, namely the Mediterranean and Africa
- the EU democratic governance for a united, fair and resilient Europe

If a majority consensus will be reached to elaborate a new constitutional Treaty, the best way is to recognize the **leading role of the EP** in cooperation with the national Parliaments. At the end of a constituent process, the EU citizens will have to voice their opinion by means of a **pan-European referendum** to be held the same day in all the Member States.

4. An Empower Roadmap

The Conference on the Future of Europe should design an “**empower roadmap**” making use of UN and World Bank reports demonstrating how digital tools could empower public authorities and individuals to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and climate agreements. While addressing the twin crises by design - bound together our system leadership should aim to **three objectives**:

- the greatest mobilization of people and resources ever in peacetime;
- innovative governance schemes and societal innovation towards more resilience, solidarity, justice;
- in a digital age, to build trust, share knowledge and monitor use of EU funds.

Milan, 7th January, 2020

EUROPEAN MOVEMENT-ITALY-ME/IT, ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DES ENSEIGNANTS-AEDE, ASSOCIAZIONI CRISTIANE LAVORATORI ITALIANI-ACLI, ASSOCIAZIONE LUCA COSCIONI, ASSOCIAZIONE GIORNALISTI EUROPEI-AGE, ASSOCIAZIONE RICREATIVA E CULTURALE ITALIANA-ARCI, ASSOCIAZIONE DI PROMOZIONE SOCIALE-ACMOS, ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP-CITTADINANZATTIVA, BENVENUTI IN ITALIA, CIVICO EUROPA, COLLEGAMENTO ITALIANO DI LOTTA ALLA POVERTA-CILAP, ECIT FOUNDATION, EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY-ALDA, EUEM, EUMANS, EUROPEAN FUTURE FORUM, EUROPA E ECOLOGIA, EUROPE PEOPLES FORUM, EUROPEAN PARTNERS FOR ENVIRONMENT-EPE, EUROPE AMBITION 2030, FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA INSEGNANTI DI SCUOLA MEDIA-FNISM, FORUM ITALO-TUNISINO PER LA CITTADINANZA EURO-MEDITERRANEA, INFOCIVICA, LEGA DELLE AUTONOMIE LOCALI-ALI, MAGISTRATS EUROPEENS POUR LA DEMOCRATIE ET LES LIBERTES-MEDEL, MOVIMENTO FEDERALISTA EUROPEO-MFE, NEW EUROPEANS, ONEDEMOS.EU, PEACEFUL REVOLUTION FOUNDATION, SAUVONS L'EUROPE, SCIENCE FOR DEMOCRACY, VOLT EUROPE

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