
Sassoli: “Citizens call for a different, more efficient Europe, closer to their needs”

The Conference on the Future of Europe is of great importance to the European Parliament and it is a theme that will undoubtedly engage us throughout the legislature. The Conference is the result of a request from the European Parliament, which the President of the Commission, Von der Leyen, took up last July, after the European elections. Our request was not only prompted by the European Council's failure with the regard to the process of nominating the Presidency of the European Commission after the elections. Indeed, on several occasions we underlined the limits of EU governance, further evidenced by the crises affecting Europe over the last decade. In the absence of a widely shared vision on the future of the European project, this Parliament has repeatedly called upon the Commission and the Council, in its resolutions, to jointly draw up the

reforms that are necessary to strengthen the Union, its capacity to act in the interests of the people,

its democratic legitimacy, its transparency, its effectiveness, ensuring broad participation of society and citizens in this debate.

European citizens, European voters, gave a very strong signal in last year's European elections. By engaging as never before, the young and not-so-young have made us aware that a change is now inevitable. They clearly requested a different Europe, one that is closer to their needs, closer to their lives; greener; more rigorous in its defence of the rule of law; more sensitive to social rights and more transparent in its decision-making processes.

Our citizens have asked us to work for a different, more democratic, more inclusive, safer and environmentally friendly Europe.

The Conference on the Future of Europe is a cornerstone of the edifice of this new Europe. And the Conference is undoubtedly a priority for us, to which Parliament intends to give strong emphasis in its joint action with the Commission and the Council and the Member States, but also with national parliaments, socio-economic actors, regional and local actors and, above all, with the citizens.



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In giving European citizens a central role in this debate and process, consulting them and involving them in the debate throughout the Conference, we wish to offer them the opportunity to contribute to shaping the future of the European Union, which is the innovative feature of the process, the sum and substance of the change we want to bring about during our term of office. For this reason, we want the Conference on the future of Europe to be the occasion to address, through debates with citizens, those issues which they regard as priorities, in line with their expectations and needs. We shall therefore listen to their requests and recommendations and implement them with a view to improving the Union's policies and realizing its objectives. Institutional challenges will also need to be addressed, for it is also the efficient activity of our institutions that enables us to move forward in the policies and areas where citizens expect Europe to be more ambitious and more successful. Many issues have already been on the table for some time: the European Parliament's right of initiative, the system of lead candidates, trans-national lists, the decision-making process in the Council ...

With the adoption of our resolution today, Parliament is sending a strong signal,

thereby initiating the negotiation process to be held with Council and Commission concerning the organization and format of the Conference. The Commission is due to present its communication next week, and we are looking forward to it with great interest. Following the conclusions of the December European Council on this matter, we are also awaiting a position from the EU Council of Ministers. It is essential that the three institutions endeavour to reach an agreement in the short term in order to formally launch the Conference on the future of Europe and start working on it. This Conference is an historic opportunity for Europe, and the European Parliament is determined to seize it to the full. Our common future, a stronger and more efficient Union, capable of facing global

challenges as a strong player - rooted in its values, its democratic tradition, its rule of law - depends on this.

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