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## **EU: Conference on the Future of Europe, launch “as soon as pandemic allows”. Likely to be postponed to 2021**

The Conference on the Future of Europe “should begin as soon as the pandemic conditions allow”. The European Parliament had hoped it could start in September, but - according to rumours - its launch is likely to take place in October or even in 2021. The work could take 1.5 to 2 years. It will be launched by a “Joint Declaration” by Council, Parliament and Commission that will contain the “mandate” for the Conference and how the process will unfold. This is according to an internal working document that is being discussed today at the meeting of the permanent representatives of the EU Council. The activities envisaged for this journey include (kick-off, mid-term and final) events in Brussels, Strasbourg and in the countries that will be holding the six-month presidency, as well as specific thematic conferences and events in Member States (always ensuring a balanced representation between institutions). It will be necessary to define the ways in which the results of the different activities will feed into the Conference, whose ultimate goal is the drafting of a “Report” to the European Council in 2022. The European institutions should then “examine swiftly how to follow up effectively to this Report, each within their own sphere of competence and in accordance with the Treaties”. As for the issues to be addressed, according to the document, “the Conference should focus on topics that truly matter to our citizens, with long-lasting impacts and wide outreach”.

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