

## Future of Europe Conference: Sassoli (EP), “we are getting started”. It will be a workshop to “shape our future”

“We are finally getting started!”, said the president of the European Parliament (EP), David Sassoli, before solemnly signing the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe, together with Prime Minister Antonio Costa, on behalf of the Council, and with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. It was necessary to launch this “workshop” that “will give us the opportunity to shape our future”. The Conference will be a “forum for debate” in which institutions will commit themselves to “listening, discussing and changing” the EU together. It will be an “innovative event”, Sassoli said, because it will put citizens, national parliaments, regions, social partners, academia and young people at the centre. This is all the more necessary now because it will provide “time for reflection to learn the lessons from the crisis and to strengthen our democracy” which is “fragile and must be defended”. At this very moment of crisis, Sassoli continued, there is a need to “renew the democratic pact” and create “a new European social contract”. Sassoli invited all European citizens to participate in the Conference that will start on 9 May. He also warned European institutions that given the magnitude of this process, whose ground rules are outlined in the Declaration, “our credibility is at stake”. “We are committed to ensure that the Conference’s recommendations and conclusions are followed up”, Sassoli said. “It is essential that this exercise leads to concrete actions: legislative changes and treaty changes, if this is desired and desirable”. The Conference, he concluded, will be “an opportunity to rediscover the soul of the European project and bring it to life in the contemporary world”.

