
Future of Europe Conference: 40 recommendations from citizens on EU's international role. Environmental protection, energy independence, EU army

What European citizens are demanding of the EU in terms of migration policies and the EU's international role is agreed on paper. At their meeting in Maastricht last weekend, the 200 members of the Panel of the Conference on the Future of Europe dealing with these issues agreed the 40 recommendations that will be presented at the plenary session in Strasbourg on 11-12 March. Coming through loud and clear is a call for greater consultation, more respect for fundamental principles and values, and more attention to the environment. Citizens call for industrial and commercial policies to protect what is made in Europe (and small local producers), and less dependence on oil and gas imports by increasing renewable energy production. For citizens, Europe will have a strong role on the international stage even if it blacklists companies that exploit child labour; if it introduces eco-scores indicating the environmental footprint of each product; if less packaging and biodegradable packaging is used; and if nuclear energy use is looked at more seriously in the European debate. On the subject of "the EU as an international partner", demands range from greater citizen involvement in EU policymaking (with initiatives such as the Conference on the Future of Europe to be held annually) to the creation of a European army: to be used exclusively for self-defence and crisis support, for example in the event of a natural disaster. Unanimous voting in the Council must be replaced with qualified majority voting (with the exception of voting on the accession of a new Member State).

Valentina Bombelli