

## **Conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe: Time has come to deliver and build Europe better**

The European Union is living in unprecedented times. The Union has never been more needed and it has never needed to change more than now.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has cost millions of lives, deepened social injustices, and put the cohesion of our societies at risk. It has shown the fatal impacts of our abusive exploitation of natural resources and our short-term profit-driven economic model. The pandemic has shown even more clearly the unsustainability of our trade models and of the underfinancing of public services. These past years have shown how vital European coordination and solidarity are, and how there will be no just and feminist recovery without them.

As we were progressively recovering from this crisis, Vladimir Putin's regime conducted an unprovoked, imperialistic and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine – an attack against a sovereign and democratic country and against the core values of the European Union. This war is showing at the greatest cost the need for a more effective Common Foreign and Defence Policy, for stopping the use of fossil and nuclear energy, greater energy independence and a more united and stronger European Union on the global stage.

This war also puts us, Europeans, in front of the mirror.

In bombarded Kyiv, in a country resisting to survive, President Zelenskyy did not only ask for support, but he signed the request for Ukraine to join the European Union. This powerful choice, that Ukrainians have repeatedly expressed, reminds us of what the European project is, how much the values and principles on which it has been built matter, and how these need to be defended and reinforced daily, both inside the EU and in the EU's external actions. In today's fast-changing geopolitical environment, the EU needs to become strategically more autonomous to lower dependencies and defend EU citizens' interests globally.

It reminds us why it is so important that the EU becomes stronger, more efficient, more united. This will be only possible with citizens and thanks to them.

Many times in the past, the future of Europe was decided behind closed doors and citizens were only consulted at the end of the process, after intergovernmental negotiations. This approach has contributed to fuelling mistrust as well as overlooking citizens' demands and needs.

For us Greens, citizen participation is key in shaping the Europe we want in the future. This is why we have supported the process of the Conference on the Future of Europe since day one. This is also why we fought for real citizen participation and for an inclusive process.

We value and welcome the work and engagement shown by citizens, organised civil society and members of parliaments throughout the duration of the Conference.

We welcome the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe and the clear ambition that citizens have shown to move Europe towards a green, social and democratic future.

We especially welcome those proposals that have been agreed to and that are key for a more progressive and sustainable future for our continent, such as:

- Reducing dependencies from oil and gas imports through energy efficiency projects; supporting affordable public transport, high-speed rail and freight network, expansion of clean and renewable energy provision;
- Introducing democratic changes like the end of unanimity, i.e. the abolition of vetoes\*, the right of legislative initiative for the European Parliament, the introduction of transnational lists, the strengthening of transparency in decision-making, and a broader right of access to documents, in particular in Council;
- Accomplishing independence from oil and gas imports by replacing them with renewable energies by speeding up the green transition, in particular through more European investments;
- Reforming of the European fiscal rules, which are the baseline for the livelihood of millions of European citizens, and a functioning and prosperous economy. The Stability and Growth Pact must function for all countries and provide the necessary tools and means to invest in decarbonisation, digitalisation, good labour, an affordable health system, security and clean energy systems, etc. Our common European fiscal and economic framework must work for the people and be democratic. Modernising our fiscal rules is also a necessity to strengthen European sovereignty, and the ability to act and to further strengthen the international role of the euro.
- Guaranteeing the right to affordable energy, to access to the internet, to minimum social standards, including minimum pensions, access to social housing when needed, better and harmonised rights at birth of children and for families for marriage and adoption;
- Ensuring that social rights take precedence in case of conflict with economic freedoms, including via the introduction of a social progress protocol in the Treaties;
- Guaranteeing that large companies are properly taxed, and that tax havens are abolished in the EU;
- Securing the more effective protection of the Rule of Law, including by making the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights universally applicable and enforceable;
- Making sure that European Trade agreements with third countries are in line with the Paris Agreement and address serious human rights issues. Trade should become a true means to an end, and no longer an end in itself.

The Conference on the Future of Europe process has confirmed that it is both possible and necessary to include citizens in a participatory way. It has created innovative tools for citizens' participation and for inclusive deliberation. It has demonstrated that building more democratic, accountable and effective institutions requires the introduction of new instruments for the participation of citizens in EU decision-making.

We welcome the Conference's efforts to engage young people directly in its activities. However, it is important this input is not forgotten. Youth engagement must not be a superficial act or void of

political power but rather the EU must continue to engage young people directly into its democratic processes and held accountable to this. Young people are not the "next generation" but are here now.

As the Conference on the Future of Europe concluded its work, the European Greens:

- Call on all responsible institutions, including national governments, to deliver by following up on the clear demands posed by the Conference.
- Call on all relevant actors to approve the reform of the European electoral law and fully implement it in time to establish a transnational constituency and draw up transnational and gender-balanced lists in the 2024 European elections.
- Call on all responsible institutions, especially national governments, and on all relevant actors to make sure the conference on the future of Europe will lead to a constituent convention aiming to develop a federal European republic, based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Call for a permanent citizens' participation mechanism at EU level in order to allow, in a systematic way, that citizens are properly involved in key policy decisions and have real opportunities to influence them.
- As numerous demands require Treaty change to be implemented, welcomes the European Parliament's readiness to trigger Article 48 of the Treaty on the European Union, and calls on the European Parliament to swiftly activate it in order to start the Treaty change procedure via a European Convention and calls on the European Council to follow up on it.
- Will, in its work on the common manifesto for the 2024 European elections, take up a leading role in providing an answer to demands formulated by the citizens in the Conference on the Future of Europe.
- Call on all Greens elected at the local, regional, national or European level to implement the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe wherever they have the capacity to do so, and to actively communicate on its process and conclusions to provide support, understanding and ownership across the electorate.

\* Note: The Swedish Green Party does not see the complete end of unanimity, i.e. the complete abolition of vetoes, as a democratic change and does not support this.