

OUTCOMES OF THE CSO BRAINSTORMING MEETING FOR THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE – 10 October 2019

Organisations present: AEGEE, Assembly of European Regions, Civil Society Europe, Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE), Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), European Citizens Action Service (ECAS), European Youth Forum, Fondation Euractiv, JEF Europe, Re-Imagine Europa, Union of European Federalists, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The main goal of the brainstorming meeting was to take stock of the level of interest of key CSOs in Brussels in the Conference on the future of Europe and to see where common positions emerge and whether they should be taken forward together.

There was broad agreement on the following points:

- The Conference could present an important opportunity to strengthen the democratic quality of the discussion on the future of Europe and a possibility to unlock useful reforms of the EU.
- The current lack of clarity from both, the side of the Commission as well as the European Parliament provides an opportunity to CSOs effectively to influence the nature of the Conference.
- The Conference cannot be another inconsequential listening exercise (Citizens' Dialogues 2.0) but must lead to concrete results. This requires that the composition of the conference respects the principle of representative democracy and decision-making power only to members with formal democratic legitimisation.
- The setup of the Conference should however allow for deep and meaningful deliberations with selected CSOs and citizens. A mix of methodologies for citizens engagement and exchange with CSOs should be applied.
- CSO and citizens participation must follow a decentralised approach and reach beyond the capitals, including to Eastern Partnership countries.
- The objective of the Conference must be ambitious and allow for proposals for treaty changes where and if necessary in the eyes of the conference.

The group decided that further thinking must happen regarding the following items:

- Which precise form should the involvement of CSOs take and how are participating CSOs selected?
- Do we support the involvement of randomly selected citizens in the framework of the conference?

- If so, how can different levels of knowledge of participating citizens about the institutional framework of the EU and EU policies be addressed effectively to allow for fruitful deliberations?
- Do we want to recommend a comprehensive list of methodologies to be applied for CSO and citizens outreach, give some ideas, or not pronounce ourselves at all?
- How should results of the Conference be taken forward? Which guarantees can the institutions give?

The group decided on the following action points:

- Form a loose and flexible coalition to push for common positions
- Participating CSOs to propose further members
- Follow up meeting to discuss open questions and agree on main common message. Invite expert from EP to feed in on developments
- Set up a mailing list for quick exchange on developments