

Minutes of the 3rd CSO CONFERENCE_Network Meeting

Tuesday 18.02.2020

The meeting starts at 12:17

The following organisations and civil society organisation were present: ALDA, AEGEE, AER, COMECE, COC-KUK, Concord, Cooperative Europe, CSE, Eastern Partnership CSF, ECAS, ECIT, JEF, Jubel Festival, New Europeans, OSEPI, UEF and YFJ.

1. Briefing on the state of the art:

JEF briefings on the respective positions of the European Institutions regarding the setting of the Conference, as well as its timeline. Last time CSOs met was Nov 21, 2019, ahead of AFCO position and EP resolution. Up to this date:

- An EP Resolution was adopted on 15th Jan 2020
 - calling for an open mandate and setting high ambitions on policies and institutions, open to Treaty change
 - setting Composition of Conference Plenary, with representatives of candidate countries
- The European Commission published on 22nd Jan 2020 a communication
 - Nothing on political goals
 - setting different terms (citizens' panels instead of Agoras)
 - Less ambitious in terms of composition of the conference
 - and no concrete feedback loop
- Currently we are waiting for the Council to agree upon the Member States position: The General Affairs committee was unable to form a position and sent things back into COREPER II on Friday. The Croatian Presidency presented a new revised draft of the Council's position. The Croatian Presidency is going to continue meeting bilaterally with countries "in due time", however, we recognised divergences regarding:
 - The question of Treaty change (with AT in favour, but other MS such as DK, FI, IE, LT, LV, NL, EE rather sceptic);
 - The Chairperson of the Conference
- Since then JEF and UEF have been active; organised the Final Conference of the I Choose Europe Campaign end with a debate with MEPs on the Conference and simulated a Youth Agora debating with participants and attended the CSE Extraordinary Assembly with five MEPs too.

2. Discussion with CSOs and organisations :

- AER reports that they have good contacts with the Croatian Presidency and inform that after contacts with Commissioner Šuica, a joint declaration should come in two months. Council Presidency to set a proposal in early March.

- UEF reports large disagreement between MS and state their fear for civil society dialogues 2.0, civic servants draw up conclusions
 - Whether citizens are allowed to induce treaty changes?
 - One MS pushing for treaty change is AT
 - Timeline unclear - start in May. But how will EP and Council be able to come to an agreement?
 - Where does that leave us as CSO?
 - No feedback group
- YFJ states that everything heard about the Council is extremely worrying. And informs they are working together with JEF and AEGEE on a concept for the Youth Agora.
- COMECE asks about the role of social partners and offers his expertise.
- AER good connection with Croatian PermRep, on behalf of whole network
- UEF proposes sending a letter to different Presidency, especially the current Croatian Presidency and the upcoming German Presidency.
- Cooperatives Europe, part of the liaison group in EESC, informs the network that the EESC is planning to draft a statement; and in this regard, CSOs point out that many of our organisations are members of different platforms and initiatives discussing the Conference on the Future of Europe.
- YFJ all messages from all sides are good, no 'regular' citizens aware of this process.
- CSE informs they will be meeting with the Commissioner on Friday 21st Feb.

3. Extending the CSO network and exploring common windows of opportunity for us as civil society to be active?

This third meeting was the first gathering after Christmas. CSOs discussed Synergies with platforms and other initiatives taking place. The discussion aimed to define the goal of the CSO's group, the possible actions to take in common and the structure of meetings.

- CSE stresses the lack of funding and points out the option of preparing calls together in the future in order to possibly organise a campaign together.
- Jubel Festival offers SECO as venue and Stand up for Europe as social media for communication efforts
- CSOs also identified the need to connect with other discussions: CSE, Europe we want, Liaison Group and other initiatives.
- In this sense, OSEPI expresses the window of opportunity for common CSO lobbying.
- ECAS affirms that one of the opportunities for CSO is monitoring, which is crucial and will permit CSOs to report to citizens in the degree of implementation that decision-makers achieve regarding the input of the Citizens during the process of the conference.

- CSE open to facilitating the process with expertise, e.g., providing briefings to citizens in agoras. They also stress the importance on communication in raising awareness raising.
- UEF has identified different pressing issues and strategic objectives for the CSO Network. CSO should: keep up pressure to the EP and where there could be a overlapping interest should attempt to develop common proposals. For this, it is essential that CSO stay in continuous dialogue and come contact while opening up to other initiatives and networks searching for synergies and boosting our messages.
- After the reflection on the role of the Network two elements can be summed up: First, CSOs should set up a format for the next meeting that allows to deepen the common goals and the advocacy opportunities of the network. Secondly, CSO Network should meet in the coming weeks once the position of the General Affairs Council is clearer.

4. Shaping the setting of the Youth Agoras - JEF, AEGEE and YFJ present their proposals for the Youth Agoras. They will share their proposal with the Conference_Network mailing list. Their proposal will be submitted to the relevant Institutions (Specially Commission and Parliament) next week.

5. Europe Future Fringe - Roger Casale presents the Europe Future Fringe initiative.

6. Next meeting - UEF commits to send a follow-up with the main ideas discussed in to set a new meeting within, pending the

Meeting closes at 13:42 h.