

Briefing of the 3rd CSOs CONFERENCE_Network Meeting, 18th Feb 2020

ALDA, AEGEE, AER, COMECE, COC-KUK, Concord, Cooperative Europe, CSE, Eastern Partnership CSF, ECAS, ECIT, JEF, Jubel Festival, New Europeans, OSEPI, UEF and YFJ.

State of the Art

1. European institutions have started to shape their positions regarding the setting, the scope and the timeline of the Conference. The European Parliament, after the guidelines set in an opinion of the Constitutional Affairs Committee (AFCO), adopted a Resolution on 15th Jan 2020 calling for an open mandate and setting high ambitions on policies and institutions, including the commitment to a follow-up of the Conference, legislative proposals and initiating treaty change. It also proposes a broad composition of the Conference Plenary, with the involvement of representatives of candidate countries, as well as citizens' participation through Agoras.
2. The European Commission published on 22nd Jan 2020 a **less ambitious communication** in which proposed citizens' panels instead of Agoras and did not set any guidelines regarding the composition, nor concrete feedback loop and stating nothing on political goals. As a new feature in comparison to the EP resolution, the Commission introduces the idea of having a wide range of other Conference-related events organised by local, regional and national partners.
3. The most pressing issue however is the position of the Member States in the Council. The General Affairs Committee was unable to form a position and the Croatian Presidency presented a new revised draft of the Council's position. The Council's position diverges from that of both the Commission and the Parliament and **its lack of commitment is worrying**.

Common positions of the Network

4. During the discussion, organisations agreed upon the **need of defining a coordinated approach**. Furthermore, the following **core common ideas** have been defined:
 1. CSO's agreed on the need of making of the Conference on the Future of Europe a **real opportunity for change** (Including Treaty change, should citizens identify that need during the process);
 2. CSOs agreed that it is **essential that the Citizens have a real feedback**;
 3. CSOs agreed upon being **conductors of expertise and on the need to monitor the European institutions** during the process and implementation of the Conference, as well as during the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe.
5. JEF, AEGEE and YFJ are working on a **common proposal for the Youth Agoras**, which will be shared with the Conference_Network mailing-list. Their proposal will be submitted to the relevant Institutions.
6. CSOs proposed to explore other methods in order to exchange ideas among the CSOs Network members with regard to the next meeting, e.g., discussion in different working groups; some of these working groups could deal with strategic issues for the CSOs Network, such as: Defining the common approach of the Network, Advocacy opportunities and strategic relations, Funding opportunities, actions of the CSOs network. Furthermore, **the mailing-list (conference_network@googlegroups.com) should be further used to facilitate the exchange of ideas**.

Expanding the network and exploring synergies

7. CSOs pointed out the need to expand the CSOs Network; especially exploring synergies and connecting with other similar initiatives (CSE, Europe we want, EESC Liaison Group, etc.).
8. CSOs defined two phases in the process, relevant to CSOs action: (1) Firstly, influencing the decision-making on the Conference set-up, prior to its kick-off; (2) and secondly, the role of CSOs during the two years of the Conference on the Future of Europe.
9. During the discussion, CSOs explored different possible actions that could be carried out to exert influence and shape the Conference on the Future of Europe:
 1. Possibility of addressing common letters to the Council presidencies (especially current Croatian and upcoming German Presidencies) and other stakeholders.
 2. Possibility of coordinate CSOs action, with the option of preparing a call together in the future (for budgeting purposes) in order to possibly organise a coordinated campaign.
10. Pressing issues and strategic objectives for the CSOs Network partners :
 1. **To develop common proposals** when there is a shared interest and **to advocate together towards the EP**.
 2. CSOs to **stay in continuous dialogue and communicate while opening up to other initiatives and networks** searching for synergies and boosting our messages.
 3. To **develop and prepare for future common action**, including the possibility of coordinating a Campaign for the Conference on the Future of Europe together.

Follow-up of the meeting and next steps of the network

11. Follow up and next steps:

1. UEF will share the follow-up of the third meeting with CSO's, including a review of the first 2 meetings, for new CSOs joining the Network. UEF will continue updating our [website on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#) for CSOs to be up to date in all recent developments.
2. As mentioned before, AEGEE, YFJ and JEF will share the **proposal for the Youth Agoras** in the Conference_Network mailing-list.
3. UEF will invite CSOs Network partners to meet in the upcoming weeks, especially once the position proposed by the Croatian presidency is clearer. A discussion in the mailing-list should allow all organisations to express ideas and proposals for alternative formats for next meeting that allows to deepen in the common goals and the advocacy opportunities of the network.