Thursday 18 June 2020

P9_TA(2020)0153

Conference on the Future of Europe

European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2020 on the European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe (2020/2657(RSP))

(2021/C 362/02)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its resolutions of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty ([1]), of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union ([2]), of 16 February 2017 on budgetary capacity for the euro area ([3]), and of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the future of Europe ([4]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2017 on a European Pillar of Social Rights ([5]),

— having regard to the proposal by the then President-Designate of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen of 16 July 2019 in the framework of the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 on the organisation of a Conference on the Future of Europe (the 'Conference'),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 22 January 2020 entitled 'Shaping the Conference on the Future of Europe' (COM(2020)0027),

— having regard to the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019 on the general approach to the Conference on the Future of Europe,

— having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe ([6]),

— having regard to the resolution of the Committee of the Regions of 12 February 2020 on the Conference on the Future of Europe,

— having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences ([7]),

— having regard to its resolution of 15 May 2020 on the new multiannual financial framework, own resources and the recovery plan ([8]),

— having regard to the statement of the Conference of Presidents on the 70th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration,

— having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas there is a need to tackle both the internal and the external challenges that Europe is facing, as well as the new societal and transnational challenges which had not been fully envisaged when the Lisbon Treaty was adopted; whereas the number of significant crises that the Union has undergone demonstrates that institutional and political reform are needed in multiple governance areas;

([1]) OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 215.
([2]) OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 201.
([3]) OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 235.
([4]) Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0098.
([5]) OJ C 242, 10.7.2018, p. 24.
([6]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0010.
([7]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0054.
([8]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0124.

B. whereas the current COVID-19 crisis has shown to a very high cost that the EU remains an unfinished project and that the failure to ensure solidarity and coordination, the economic, health and social shocks, and the ongoing attacks on fundamental rights and the rule of law need to be better addressed by the Conference; whereas the ongoing crisis therefore makes it even more urgent for the European Union to start work on how to become more effective, democratic and closer to citizens;

C. whereas Parliament, the Commission and the Council have all stated that a Conference on the Future of Europe should be organised and that this Conference process should be an opportunity to closely involve EU citizens in a bottom-up exercise in which they are listened to and their voices contribute to the debates on the future of Europe;

D. whereas the Conference should enable an open forum for discussion among the different participants without a predetermined outcome; whereas the common agreement of the three institutions should therefore only concern the format and organisation of the Conference;

1. Believes that 10 years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, 70 years after the Schuman Declaration and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the time is ripe for a reappraisal of the Union; is of the opinion that the COVID-19 crisis has made the need for the Conference even more pressing;

2. Is of the opinion that the COVID-19 crisis has made the need to reform the European Union even more apparent, while demonstrating the urgent need for an effective and efficient Union; is therefore of the opinion that the Conference process should take into account the EU's existing recovery instruments and the solidarity that has already been established, while ensuring ecological sustainability, economic development, social progress, security and democracy;

3. Reaffirms the position it outlined in its resolution of 15 January 2020 in all its dimensions and reiterates its call on the Council and the Commission to engage in negotiations to find common agreement on the establishment of the Conference on the Future of Europe before the summer break;

4. Regrets that the Council has not yet adopted a position on the Conference and therefore urges the Council to overcome its differences and to promptly come forward with a position on the format and organisation of the Conference;

5. Welcomes the adoption by the Commission of its position on the Conference and its readiness to go forward in a speedy fashion;

6. Urges the Council to include in its mandate a commitment to meaningful follow-up and the meaningful direct involvement of citizens, and to keep the scope of the Conference open to all possible outcomes, including legislative proposals, initiating treaty change or otherwise;

7. Stresses that despite the pandemic the direct engagement of citizens, civil society organisations, social partners and elected representatives must remain a priority of the Conference; is therefore looking forward to starting the Conference so as to build a more democratic, more effective and more resilient Union together with all EU citizens;

8. Recognises that the start of the Conference had to be delayed as a result of the pandemic; notes, however, that the pandemic has highlighted certain weaknesses in our Union; is therefore determined to start the Conference as soon as possible in autumn 2020;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.