

# Future of Europe: institutional reforms

## The Commission

- The Commission should be a political executive branch, not an apolitical or technocratic institution, and advocate the common interests of the entire Union.
- The composition of the Commission should be decided by a coalition formed by a majority of MEPs in the European Parliament.
- The Spitzenkandidaten system should be reformed. The President should be nominated and elected with a majority by the European Parliament and approved by the Council.
- Parliament may at any time cast a constructive vote of no-confidence against the President of the Commission, an individual Commissioner or the entire Commission.
- The number of commission portfolios should be reduced to a maximum of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of current member states, making sure that each region of the European Union is represented in the Commission. A rotation system may be put in place.
- Each Member State nominates two candidates, the President then selects out of this pool. Parliament eventually votes on these candidates individually.

## The European Council

- The European Council and the Council of the European Union are merged into one council, that is equated with the Parliament when it comes to lawmaking competence. This includes the right of initiative to propose new legislation.
- The Council should consist of representatives from the national governments.
- The Council should operate with a qualified majority on all policy fields including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which means that 55% of the member states need to vote in favour, these member states should then represent 55% of the European population. The blocking minority (at least four member states representing more than 35% of the EU population) is to be abolished, while keeping the Ioannina Compromise.
- The Council selects one chairperson for a 5-year-period, who will lead the meetings
- The Council has to increase its transparency. Generally all its meetings including those not concerned with legislation as well as those of its subordinate bodies (preparatory bodies and Coreper) must be public and live-streamed.

## The Parliament

- Member states should have the opportunity to make use of the single-member constituencies for national minorities, without permitting a (de facto) first-past-the-post system in cases of very small constituencies.

\*The outcome of the Platform on the Conferences for the Future of Europe is a result of the common work of representatives of LYMEC member organisations and represents a compromise achieved within LYMEC, without prejudice to any further additional proposals the individual member organisations can add to this common ground work once the Conference for the future of Europe starts. This outcome doesn't affect the LYMEC positions reflected in the policy book.

- Parliament should have the right of initiative to propose new legislation. Suggestions should be able to be proposed by either a political group, a committee or a group of MEPs representing at least 5% of Parliament.
- Parliament should continue having standing and temporary committees with a focus on specific political areas. The composition of the committees should continue to reflect the political composition in the Parliament.
- Transition into a single seat parliament in Brussels to save on administrative costs.
- Gender equality should be promoted, e.g. by establishing a parental leave substitution system in the European Parliament, available for any of the parents.

## Court of Justice

- Each Member State should have at least one Judge, either in the Court of Justice or on the Court of First Instance. This judge shall be elected by the respective national parliament with a two thirds majority or appointed by their member state's higher court.
- the European Court of Justice must have the ability to enact financial sanctions on a member state, if the Commission suggests such a proposal.
- there must be more openness, about the court's decisions. If a verdict is reached, the parties shall have the right to get access to anonymised dissent among these judges
- the Court shall continue having the right to interpret treaties and judge states, firms and private persons. Furthermore, we wish the court's administrative capabilities to be strengthened to make the process of handling cases more efficient than it is now.
- The possibility of creating a "diversity advisory board" composed of a variety of professionals with diverse backgrounds and origins should be examined. This board would have the power to oversee current decisions and issue recommendations.

## The EU's democratic legitimacy

- The European Union ought to be represented by a head of state. This function may be fulfilled by the President of the European Commission.
- Both the Parliament and the Council should be able to submit new legislation proposals.
- Part of the election list in all countries should be transnational to ensure that MEPs represent the interest of the European population as a whole.
- The democratic process within the Union should be as open and transparent as possible. All parliamentary sessions should always be streamed online and promoted on social media platforms. The voting results should also always be shared through social media and online platforms. The EU should invest more to ensure more presence in national media and other digital tools.

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- The EU must establish a rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights mechanism, which ensures that member states only receive investment from the Structural Funds if they live up to the democratic rule of law principles.
- There should be a larger focus on the internet as a democratic connector between the population and elected officials within the EU.
- European funds and programmes should be increased in order to educate the European population, specifically young people about the functioning of the EU, their duties and rights.
- The promotion of the European citizen initiative should be increased and its bureaucracy reduced.
- Negotiations and efforts should be made in order to give the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee more influence.

## EU's political limits

- Subsidiarity and the proximity to citizens should be central in all EU decisions. This means that decisions should be made as close to citizens as possible and decisions should be made at the lowest possible political level. However, this must be balanced with the responsibility the Member States owe to each other as members of the same union.
- The EU should focus on policy areas where there is a European added value - i.e. areas where there are common benefits of collaborating rather than solving tasks nationally. Those policy areas are in particular trade, the internal market, foreign affairs, defense, energy, asylum, migration and climate policy.
- Sharing resources in the areas of youth, education, transport and public health is a positive way to collaborate.
- The EU has a responsibility to promote economic cooperation and growth within the EU and with the rest of the world.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights must bind the Member States in all cases and not only when implementing Union law. However, the Member States may guarantee a higher degree of protection in areas not completely determined by Union law.
- The EU budget must shift its focus to science and research.