

**Conference on the Future of Europe:
Common approach amongst Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and
[placeholder for further likeminded countries]**

The governments of Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and [placeholder] have identified matters of common interest in order to have a close collaboration during the Conference on the Future of Europe. We welcome collaboration with as many like-minded countries as possible with a focus on the priorities outlined below.

We are determined to use the Conference to promote an **effective and rules-based EU** that delivers real, tangible solutions to the challenges that the EU is facing. This entails a focus on real policies and specific results – on the basis of the priorities already agreed to in the **Strategic Agenda** of the European Council. The Union framework offers potential to allow priorities to be addressed in an effective manner¹. The Conference's structure should be lean, streamlined and avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy. It should not create legal obligations, nor should it duplicate or unduly interfere with the established legislative processes.

Moreover, an overarching priority will be to take the Conference as an opportunity to engage citizens in a substantial dialogue on what they expect from the EU. This dialogue should be based on an inclusive approach that ensures diversity and gender equality.

We remain convinced that the EU's legitimacy and popular support is intrinsically linked to meeting the expectations of our citizens – in terms of both tangible results and democratic, transparent processes. To that end, the results of public consultations should reflect the inputs put forward. Follow-up is important in order to demonstrate to citizens that their input is taken seriously.

We will in particular cooperate on the following issues in the Conference, giving due consideration to the challenges the EU has faced during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Protecting and promoting the Rule of Law and the EU's other fundamental values, both within the EU and globally
- Making the EU a global frontrunner on climate through an ambitious green transition and implementation of climate targets in an efficient way that contributes to the EU's competitiveness
- A just and green economic recovery, including reforms that increase the EU's competitiveness, resilience and stability
- Ensuring an effective, competitive, socially inclusive and sustainable internal market and facilitating the digital transition of the EU
- Managing migration challenges in a comprehensive, fair and humane manner
- Building up comprehensive security, including by fighting terrorism and violent extremism, both online and offline
- The EU as a strong and credible global actor, including working towards more efficient decision-making processes, e.g. within the CFSP

¹ It is recalled that the Conference does not fall within the scope of Article 48 TEU, cf. the Council mandate from June 2020

- Promoting a rules-based approach across the board, both within the EU and externally, by upholding rules within the EU and by promoting rules-based cooperation, multilateralism and free trade at global level

In addition to the specific policy priorities, we will focus on horizontal questions in order further to improve the EU's **democratic legitimacy**. This entails the following initiatives:

- Promoting the democratic legitimacy of the EU's institutions through, amongst other things, greater transparency surrounding all phases of the legislative procedure
- Working towards ensuring that the Rule of Law is consistently monitored and upheld both at EU level and across the Member States
- Ensuring the correct implementation and efficient enforcement of all EU legislation within the Member States.
- Protecting and promoting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality
- Involving citizens including young people, civil society, social partners and national parliaments in discussions on the future of Europe, while also considering relevant ways of enhancing the role of national parliaments in the daily work of the EU, including in the application of the principle of subsidiarity
- Safeguarding the inter-institutional balance, including the division of competences.