

# Key Proposals from the Conference on the Future of Europe in the Area of Values, Rule of Law & Security



## News

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On 29/30 April 2022, the Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe adopted [49 proposals on a wide range of EU topics and more than 300 measures](#) on how to achieve them. The Conference on the Future of Europe is a bottom-up exercise designed for European citizens to debate on Europe's challenges and future priorities, under the authority of the three EU institutions, represented by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Council and the President of the European Commission (→ [eucrim news of 20 March 2021](#)). The Conference Plenary debated the recommendations (grouped by themes) from the national and European Citizens' Panels and the input gathered from the Multilingual Digital Platform. These recommendations had been presented by and discussed with citizens. At the seventh and last Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe, that closed a months-long process of intense deliberations, the proposals were put forward and formulated by the Conference Plenary to the Executive Board on a consensual basis.

On Europe Day (9 May 2022), the President of the European Parliament *Roberta Metsola*, French President *Emmanuel Macron* on behalf of the Council, and *Ursula von der Leyen*, President of the European Commission, received the final report on the outcome of the Conference from the Co-Chairs of the Conference Executive Board [at a closing ceremony in Strasbourg](#),

In the area of "Values and rights, rule of law, security" the Plenary focused on topics such as upholding EU values, media independence, data protection and cybersecurity, and anti-discrimination.

### **Proposal: Upholding EU values across all EU countries**

The objective is to systematically uphold the rule of law across all EU Member States. The Plenary points out:

- EU values must be fully upheld in all Member States. There is a need to ensure that the values and principles enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are non-negotiable, irreversible and sine qua non conditions for EU membership and accession;
- European values have to be made tangible for EU citizens. The Union citizenship should be strengthened through a European citizenship statute providing citizen-specific rights and freedoms, as well as a statute for European cross-border associations and non-profit organisations;
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights should be made universally applicable and enforceable;

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- The scopes of the "Regulation on the Conditionality Mechanism" and other rule of law instruments need to be effectively applied and evaluated;
- Educational and media programmes that make EU values part of migrants' integration process and encourage interactions between migrants and EU citizens should be fostered.

In this context, the EP took several positions:

- [Resolution of 19 May 2022](#) on the Commission's 2021 Rule of Law Report;
- [Resolution of 10 March 2022](#) on the rule of law and the consequences of the ECJ ruling (→ [eucrim 1/2022, 23](#));
- [Resolution of 16 January 2020](#) on ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) of the TEU regarding Poland and Hungary.

#### **Proposal on Data Protection**

The Plenary aims to guarantee a more protective and citizen-oriented data treatment policy. This objective will be achieved by:

- Fully implementing the existing data privacy legislation and reviewing it in order to evaluate, if necessary, the establishment of stronger enforcement mechanisms for entities processing personal data;
- Giving more effect to the principle of privacy by design and default, e.g. through easily understandable and user-friendly harmonised data processing consent forms;
- Evaluating and introducing clearer/more protective rules on the processing of minors' data;
- Licensing entities that process personal data shall at EU level. These entities should be subject to independent, external annual data protection audit in order to make sure that these entities do not violate data protection and the right to privacy.

Relevant EP positions:

- [Resolution of 7 October 2021](#) on the state of EU cyber defence capabilities
- [EP position on NIS 2 Directive](#) (→ also [eucrim News](#) of 18 January 2022)

#### **Proposal on Media, Fake News, Disinformation, Fact-Checking, Cybersecurity**

The Plenary aims to tackle disinformation by further promoting media independence and pluralism as well as media literacy by:

- Introducing legislation that addresses threats to media independence through EU-wide minimum standards;
- Preventing large media monopolies and ensuring media pluralism and independence from undue political, corporate and/or foreign interference by strictly enforcing EU competition rules in the media sector;
- Setting up an EU body in charge of addressing and tackling targeted disinformation and interference, increasing situational awareness and strengthening fact-checking organisations/independent media;
- Promoting citizens' media literacy and raising awareness about disinformation and unintentional dissemination of fake news;
- Building on existing initiatives (such as the Code of Practice on Disinformation and the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)), to require online platforms to issue clear statements about the algorithms they use and the disinformation risks users are exposed to.

Relevant EP position:

- [Resolution of 11 November 2021](#) on strengthening democracy and media freedom and pluralism in the EU: the undue use of actions under civil and criminal law to silence journalists, NGOs and civil society

#### **Proposal on Anti-Discrimination, Equality and Quality of Life**

The Plenary aims to take actions to harmonise living conditions across the EU and improve EU citizens' socio-economic quality of life by:

- Developing transparent quality of life indicators, including economic, social and rule of law criteria – in consultation with experts and social partners – in order to establish a clear and realistic timeline for raising social standards and achieving a common EU socio-economic structure;
- Increasing and facilitating direct public investment in education, health, housing, physical infrastructures, care for the elderly and people with disabilities;
- Encouraging taxing large corporations, fighting access to tax havens and eliminating their existence in the EU with a view to increasing public investment in priority areas such as education (scholarships, Erasmus) and research;
- Providing EU-wide criteria on anti-discrimination in the labour market and incentivizing the hiring by private companies of people that are usually most subject to discrimination;
- Ensuring the creation and facilitation of affordable kindergartens, both public and in the private sector, and free childcare for those in need of it.

Relevant EP position:

- [Resolution of 21 January 2021](#) with recommendations to the Commission on the right to disconnect

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission will now examine how to effectively follow up on these proposals, each within their own spheres of competence and in accordance with the Treaties. A feedback event to update citizens will take place in autumn 2022.

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