

"THIS IS THE MOMENT TO ANSWER EUROPE'S CALL " ROBERTA MESTOLA SAID OVER CONF FOR FUTURE OF 9 MAY

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USPA NEWS - President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola received citizens' contributions for a better, stronger and fairer Europe during the Conference on the Future of Europe closing ceremony. In her speech, President Metsola spoke about the reality of a gap which exists between what people expect and what Europe is able to deliver at the moment, particularly in the areas of health, energy and security. She also said that the future of Europe is tied to future of Ukraine. This Conference on the Future of Europe involved hundreds of thousands of people across Europe. This has been an intense experience in the power of participatory democracy after months of discussions and powerful debate. I want to thank you for believing in the promise of Europe. "And I want to specifically thank Guy Verhofstadt and Dubravka Šuica and the different Presidencies of the Council - Prime Minister Costa, Minister Clement Beaune here today - thank you for leading this process. I also want to thank our late President David Sassoli who would be so proud. He would be so proud today. And of course none of this could have been done without all the staff, and I ask you please to applaud the staff of the Europe.

"EUROPE HAS NEVER BEEN AFRAID NOW IT IS TIME TO STEP UP NOT STEP BACK" ROBERTA METSOLA SAID

"We are once again at a defining moment of European integration and no suggestion for change should be off-limits. Whatever process is required in order for us to get there should be embraced." Roberta Metal said, as she was referring to the current context of Ukraine's conflict and she added « But as we speak here, Ukraine is still being invaded. Bombs are still killing indiscriminately. Women are still being raped. Millions have fled and will continue to do so. People are still trapped in the tunnels under Mariupol. Ukrainians look to Europe for support. Because they know what millions of Europeans who were forced to spend half a century behind the yoke of the iron curtain will tell you: There is no alternative to Europe.

The future of Europe is tied to the future of Ukraine. The threat we face is real. And the cost of failure is momentous. »

President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, said: "Citizens - especially young people - are at the heart of our vision for the future of Europe. They have directly shaped the outcome of the Conference. We are at a defining moment of European integration and no suggestion for change should be off-limits. We should not be afraid to unleash the power of Europe to change people's lives for the better."

Roberta Metsola highlighted the importance of the Conference for the future of Europe, and how the collection of recommendations from European citizen is important, relevant and shall be impactful : However, this Conference also proves that there exists a gap between what people expect, and what Europe is able to deliver at the moment. That is why we need a convention as the next step. And that is what the European Parliament will insist on. There are issues that simply cannot wait.

When it comes to European Union's defense, as we are facing the Ukraine's conflict. Roberta Metsola explained : "That is true for defence. We need a new security and defence policy because we know that we need each other, that alone we are vulnerable. And here we do not have to reinvent the wheel. We can complement rather than compete with existing alliances." As read of the issue of energy, she said that "It is true for energy. We are still too reliant on autocrats. Where Energy islands still exist. Where we must support each other as we disentangle ourselves from the Kremlin and invest in alternative energy sources. Where we understand that renewable energy is as much about security as it is about the environment. But we can only do that together."

President Emmanuel Macron commented: "Through the crises that we have gone through collectively in recent years, Europe has changed. We must continue this development and ensure that the Union lives up to the aspirations and expectations expressed by the citizens. The Conference on the Future of Europe, which we are closing today, is a unique exercise and unprecedented in its scope, a breath of fresh air for our continent. Its conclusions constitute a very rich source of proposals, which each institution must examine within the framework of its competences. The Council will have the opportunity to express itself in the coming weeks. As this exercise is coming to an end under the French Presidency, I thank the previous presidencies for their commitment and am happy to hand over the follow-up to be given to the conclusions of the Conference to the Czech and Swedish presidencies."

President Ursula von der Leyen said: "Democracy, peace, individual and economic freedom. This is what Europe stands for today when the war rages again on our continent. This is at the heart of the Conference on the future of Europe. The European Union has to

continue to deliver on European citizens' expectations. Today, their message has been received loud and clear. And now, it is time to deliver." Over the last year, through a multitude of events and discussions organised across the EU, national and European citizens' panels, plenary meetings as well as exchanges on the dedicated Multilingual Digital Platform, the Conference became a truly open forum to discuss the Europe we want to live in. It enabled a transparent, inclusive and structured debate with European citizens about the issues that are of relevance to them and for their future.

WORK OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT-----

In its resolution on the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe adopted on 4 May, the European Parliament welcomed and endorsed the Conference conclusions. MEPs acknowledged its proposals require Treaty change and asked the Committee on Constitutional Affairs to prepare proposals to reform the EU Treaties, a process which would take place through a Convention in line with Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union. Guy Verhofstadt, representing Parliament as co-Chair of the Executive Board, said: "Citizens' recommendations and the Conference conclusions offer us a roadmap to avoid the European Union becoming irrelevant or even disappearing. A new, effective and more democratic Europe is possible. A Europe that is sovereign and is capable of acting, as citizens clearly expect. There is really no time to waste. We need to honour the outcome of the Conference and implement its conclusions as soon as possible."

NEXT STEPS

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

BACKGROUND

The Conference on the Future of Europe has been a novel and innovative process, a bottom-up exercise for Europeans to have their say on what they expect from the European Union. European citizens of different geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and/or level of education participated in the Conference, with young Europeans playing a central role.: Source: European Parliament

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