

## Julian Plottka

Scientist at the Jean Monnet Chair for European Politics at the University of Passau

### **The Conference on the Future of Europe: Limits and Potential of a Supranational Experiment in Deliberative Democracy**

Following the European elections in 2019, the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, promised to organise a Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) to address institutional reforms and urgent policy challenges. While the European Parliament was pushing for a new European Convention to reform the EU Treaties, the national governments were reluctant to give the CoFoE any real influence. Negotiations of the mandate and the structure of the CoFoE took more than one year, before the conference was kicked-off on 9 May 2021.

In addition to an executive board steering the CoFoE, its main bodies for deliberation are the plenary, four European Citizens' Panels and the multi-lingual online platform <https://futureu.europa.eu>. The direct involvement of citizens was the only aspect all EU institutions could agree on during the negotiations. Using the multi-lingual online platform, citizens can propose and discuss reform ideas and inform themselves about additional events. In each of the four citizens' panels, 200 randomly selected citizens from all EU member states discuss reform proposals and report their conclusions to the conference plenary. The plenary is composed of 433 members, including Members of the European and national parliaments, government and European Commission representatives, citizens, representatives from the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, social partners and civil society organisations.

Following an introduction to the setup and making of the CoFoE, the seminar will analyse the conflicts between the three EU institutions during the negotiations to understand the real potential of the CoFoE. The key question is, whether these conflicts resurface during the conference deliberations or whether citizens' involvement allows for more constructive debates. Having understand the potential and the limits of the CoFoE, the participants will have the opportunity to debate their own reform and policy proposals in a deliberative exercise. Following the seminar, they are free to upload their ideas on the multi-lingual online platform as contribution to the debate on the future of Europe.

#### Recommended readings:

- Julian Plottka: Making the Conference on the Future of Europe a Success, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: Europa, Brussels 2021, URL: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/bruessel/17584.pdf>
- Julian Plottka: Die Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas zwischen „Konvent 2.0“ und „Intergouvernementalismus 3.0“: Warum Europa diese Chance zur Reform nutzen muss, in: integration 3/2020, S. 231-244, URL: [doi.org/10.5771/0720-5120-2020-3-231](https://doi.org/10.5771/0720-5120-2020-3-231).

- John Pinder/Simon Usherwood: The European Union. A very Short Introduction. 3rd edition. Oxford 2013.

Contact: [julian.plottka@iep-berlin.de](mailto:julian.plottka@iep-berlin.de)