



European Committee  
of the Regions



Governo dos Açores

# Future of Europe

## What the next generation expects



#EUlocal



### Event type

Online YEP event  
and Local Dialogue

### Date

27 May 2021

### Initialising member

Vasco Alves  
Cordeiro (PT/PES)

### Audience

Around 135 participants (Webex: 110, YouTube:25)

### Organisers

Autonomous Region of Azores

European Committee of the Regions

### Partners

### Themes

Future of Europe, youth



## Speakers

- **Vasco Alves Cordeiro** (PT/PES),  
First Vice-President of European  
Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- **Carlos Eduardo Pacheco  
Amaral**, Regional Director for  
European Affairs and External  
Cooperation (Azores  
Government), on behalf of the  
President of the Autonomous  
Region of the Azores, José  
Manuel Bolieiro
- **Jelena Drenjanin** (SE/EPP)
- **Satu Haapanen** (FI/Greens)
- **Pavel Branda** (CZ/ECR)
- **Tobias Gotthardt** (DE/Renew E.)
- **Yoomi Renström** (SE/PES)
- **Kieran McCarthy** (IE/EA)
- **Wolfgang Petzold** CoR, Deputy  
Director, Communication



## Key messages

1. The EU should provide feedback to participants in the Conference;
2. The EU should invest in young people (education, training, jobs, investment on local projects);
3. The EU should help in creating opportunities for young people in disadvantaged areas, such as the outermost regions.
4. Digitalisation can boost the participation of young people in decision making;
5. Regions and cities are actors of change;
6. Citizens' commitment and engagement, including in political parties and civil society organisations, is essential.

Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES), First Vice-President of the CoR:

*"Europe's future is about all of us, especially young people. The Conference on the Future of the Europe rightly aims to put citizens at the center of the debate, but it cannot only be about participation. The follow-up will be as important. EU institutions, including the CoR, will have to deliver. Dialogues should be the start of a journey to change the EU for the better."*

Carlos Eduardo Pacheco Amaral, Regional Director for European Affairs and External Cooperation (Azores Government):

*"The challenges presently facing us are tremendous; surpassed only by the generosity and the creativity of our new generations. And that translates into a fountainhead of reassurance and tranquility when envisioning our common future. With its young people, Europe is indeed in good hands."*



## Press/Social media coverage

### Media coverage

[Ansa.it](https://www.ansa.it)

### Website

[Future of Europe](https://futureofeurope.eu)

[CoR Events](https://www.coe.int/en/web/coe-events)

### Social Media

[#Eulocal](https://twitter.com/EUlocal)

[#YoungLocalLeaders](https://twitter.com/YoungLocalLeaders)



## Context

This event was the opening session of the European Committee of the Regions' **Young Elected Politicians (YEP) programme 2021**. Over 125 participants attended, including YEPs, young politicians from the Azores and Madeira, students and representatives of civil society. As the event was dedicated to the Conference on the Future of Europe, which was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021, a presentation on the Conference was given, explaining the structure and timeline of the Conference. It was stressed that youth has been given a special place in the Conference structure with the European Citizens Panels constituted of at least 1/3 of young people between 16 and 25 years. The CoR will contribute to the Conference through events, local dialogues and with an opinion survey, and by including as much as possible young politicians.

### 1. What do you expect from the Conference on the Future of Europe?

Speakers stressed the need for the EU to rebuild confidence and to engage with young people and socially disadvantaged people. The Conference should look to the topics which are important to young people, such as digitalisation and climate change. The debate highlighted the issues faced by young people living in remote regions, such as difficulties in finding a job and lack of training opportunities. The results of the Conference should be taken on board by the EU and a feedback should be given to all participants, while making sure that a common position is found through collective engagement and mutual listening. The issue of inequality should also be addressed.

### 2. What do you expect as a young person from the EU?

Young people should be provided with a safe and inspiring environment, and the EU should deliver in a pragmatic and concrete way, through local and regional authorities. Training, education, digitalisation, environmental projects and investment in tourism should enable young people to stay in the Azores. Digitalisation can allow the inclusion of young people in decision making, by boosting democracy and making the EU close to them.

### 3. Which is the place of regions and cities in the future of the EU?

Regions and cities should be represented at the Conference as they are an actor of change. In particular, the issue of gender equality should be tackled at all level of governments, starting from the local level. Local politicians should represent Europe at a local level, and Europe should help in creating opportunities for people. Working together and cooperating will be essential to create a better future.

## Conclusions

The Conference is a unique opportunity to contribute shaping the future of Europe. Citizens, and in particular young people, should take responsibility and ownership, and have their say. EU institutions have to listen to the results, follow up concretely and be accountable.

Mr Cordeiro closed the event by calling for citizens to be aware that change is up to them: commitment and engagement, including in political parties and civil society organisations, is essential. Moreover, he stressed the need for EU Institutions, which are accountable to citizens, to ensure follow up. "*What's next?*" is the key question that institutions need to reply when engaging with citizens.