



Young Leaders for the Future of Europe

Event type

Online event

#EURegionsWeek

Date

12 October 2021

Audience

65 participants

Organisers

European Committee of the Regions

EU40

Themes

Future of Europe



Speakers

- **Lena Düpont** (DE/EPP), MEP
- **Alin Mituța** (RO/Renew Europe), MEP
- **Céline Geissmann** (FR/PES), deputy mayor of Strasbourg and participant of the YEP programme 2021
- **Susanna Croci** (IT/ECR), Councillor of Venegono Superiore and participant of the YEP programme 2021



Key messages

1. The COFE should bring concrete outcomes;
2. Citizens are interested in very concrete problems, and on how the EU can help;
3. Local politicians have an important role in promoting and being active in the COFE;
4. Europe needs better communication and storytelling;
5. Education of young people is key;
6. All people, including disadvantaged categories, should be included in the debate.

Alin Mituța

"EU has a democratic deficit. The COFE can solve this problem, but it can be a success only if the views of citizens are taken very seriously".

Lena Düpont

"We need to create a sense and feeling of ownership and strengthen the interinstitutional working method to deliver better policies to citizens".

Céline Geissmann

"The Conference is a great opportunity to go to young people and tell them that they have a voice".

Susanna Croci

With COVID-19 and with the recovery plan, the EU is entering in the life of citizens. But there is a problem of communication, as people do not know the EU.



Press/Social media coverage

Website

[Future of Europe](#)

[CoR Events](#)

[EU40](#)

Social Media

[#Eulocal](#)

[#YoungLocalLeaders](#)

[#CoFoE](#)



Context

At the occasion of the European Week of Regions and Cities, the YEP programme and EU40, the platform of young pro-European Members of the European Parliament, organised a dialogue between young politicians at local and EU level to discuss on the future of Europe. Two YEPs and two MEPs from different political groups and countries took the floor.

Debate

Lena Düpont affirmed that the EU, namely the interconnectivity and relationship between the three main European Institutions, is complex. Thus, one of the main things that should come out of the Conference on the Future of Europe is to promote a sense of ownership and to find a way to actually strengthen inter-institutional working methods. Communication is crucial to explain what the EU does, and in particular storytelling on how the EU contribute to a better world (peacekeeping).

Alin Mituța stressed that after the Conference, the EU should act concretely by taking into account the view of citizens. According to his experience, Europeans at every level of governance are interested in very concrete problems which affect their life and need to be addressed, for example health. He proposed the citizens' consultation to become permanent, and mentioned an EU Agora to take place on 9 May.

Céline Geissmann pointed out that it is a difficult task as a local politician to actually promote the COFE. It is important that citizens – and young people especially – engage at local level, but it is crucial that their voices are actually heard at the European level. The COFE should result in changes, in order not to break the trust of the people who participated. She mentioned some measures taken in their constituency to raise awareness on the EU, and in particular by reaching also to disadvantaged people. In her view, inclusion is essential.

Susanna Croci brought to light [a recent Eurobarometer survey](#) and the [CoR Barometer](#), where the results showed that the vast majority of Europeans want their voices heard when it comes to EU decision-making on the future of Europe. Along these lines, she mentioned that regions and cities must be more influential in policymaking at the EU level, and that the COFE must have a local base, as citizens are the roots of the EU. She also focused on the need of communicating Europe, especially to young people and in schools, by explaining the opportunities offered by the EU. Digital media can help bringing people closer to politics and politicians.

Conclusions

Young politicians expect the Conference on the Future of Europe to have a tangible outcome, which demonstrate that the voice of citizens have been heard. Communicating the EU and letting people know that they can have a say is not easy, especially in small cities and rural areas, but local politicians can actively contribute. In order to involve people it is important to speak of issues that are close to their experience, and to listen to their needs. Education is also key to build the new generation of Europeans.