



## REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

### 1. Introduction

The Conference on the Future of Europe was launched in March 2021 as a joint undertaking of the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, to listen to European citizens and let them have their say on the future of Europe, through a citizen-led series of debates and deliberations.

During the Conference, the Council actively participated with the rotating Presidency and the representatives of the 27 Member States at different levels. The representatives of the Council supported and encouraged the work of the citizens in the panels (composed of randomly selected citizens) and in the Plenary, where citizens, representatives of the EU institutions and other stakeholders, discussed citizens' recommendations.

The final report of the Conference was presented on 9 May 2022 and includes 49 proposals and 326 specific measures. The President of the Council, together with the President of the European Parliament and the President of the Commission, committed to examine swiftly how to follow up effectively on the proposals in the Conference's final report.

### 2. Initiatives of the Government of the Balearic Islands regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe

Given the importance of the insular regions in the European context and the specific challenges they face, the Government of the Balearic Islands considered that the Conference on the Future of Europe had to address the insularity issue in a comprehensive way.

To defend our island identity and to bring the EU closer to the citizens, the Government, together with the Europe Direct of the Balearic Islands, organised a series of events to rethink Europe. The events were held throughout the Balearic territory and were divided into three types. Firstly, there were events with a citizen perspective, secondly, events with an insular perspective and, finally, events with

a Mediterranean perspective. These events included theatrical adaptations and various conferences and panels among others.

On the other hand, the Government of the Balearic Islands participates in several networks in order to make its voice heard in the major decision-making forums. In this sense, the Regions with Legislative Power (RLEG) demanded a more important role within the Conference on the Future of Europe, and for this reason, the submitted a letter to the three presidents of the three most relevant European institutions. In addition, the analysis and report on the Conference on the Future of Europe of the European Policy Centre (EPC) has also been followed up.

For all this reasons, it can be said that the Government of the Balearic Islands, and its Europe Direct, have participated in the Conference on the Future of Europe.

### **3. Conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe**

The conclusions of the events held in 2021 by the Government of the Balearic Islands were minimally reflected in 3 of the 49 proposals of the report on the final outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe issued on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2022:

- Climate change energy, transport (proposal 4)
- Sustainable Growth and innovation (proposal 11)
- Enhancing EU's competitiveness and further deepening the Single Market (proposal 12)

As well as in one of the recommendations adopted by one of the panels, specifically in substream *2.1 Health Natural Environment*, which recommended the extension of the protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity and enhancing the rule of law regarding human intervention in islands.

The measures in proposals 11 and 12 have been addressed through legislative and non-legislative proposals (New Industrial Strategy, Net Zero Industry Act proposal, Chips Act...) and have been developed and implemented through European funding programmes such as Horizon Europe. On this point, and related to measure 4 of proposal 11, it is worth highlighting the initiative of the Government of the Balearic Islands which approved the Law on Waste of the Balearic Islands prohibiting the sale of single-use products in the Balearic Islands, which came into force on 20 March 2021.

Regarding proposal 4, which is the only one that contains a direct reference to the disadvantages of insularity, the actions carried out have been minimal at the level of our archipelago. The Commission has launched proposals and actions aimed at

rural areas, but there are none aimed especially at island regions. In other words, it has recognized the connectivity and infrastructure problems of both rural and island areas, but has worked without taking the latter into account.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Although it is true that through the Conference on the Future of Europe, the EU has sought to give importance to all regions, we believe that non-ultra-peripheral island regions have been relegated to second place. For this reason, the priorities of the Government of the Balearic Islands regarding insularity have made themselves heard through other networks such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) to reach European institutions.

Therefore, the results of our analysis and monitoring highlight the need for concrete and coordinated actions to improve living conditions and promote sustainable development in insular regions.

Palma, the 31st of October 2023.