

COFE Info Toolkit

> Volt Europa, is the first pan European party with more than 9,000 registered members and elected representatives in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Bulgaria. As a party, we were also the firsts who listened to local communities, identified solutions and campaigned for change. We are the first party and pan-European movement to start together with its partners the pan-European campaign for the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE).

> Through our fluid open structure, we aim to empower citizens across Europe and increase social and political participation. With our “lead by example” principles, we are actively promoting our members' engagement and contribution in developing our policies and shaping a better, more cooperative European future.

> [Valerie Sternberg and Reinier Van Lanschot, Volt Europa Co-Presidents and Volt MEP Damian Boeslager's Endorsement Letter.](#)

Who are we? > [COFE Campaign - Preparing the Future of Europe!](#)

Volt's COFE campaign team started in 2020, before the initial launch planned for the Conference. Our goal is to involve as many citizens as possible in the Conference and make sure that they have their say on the future made in Europe.

We are a group of passionate people, working together to prepare for the Conference on the Future of Europe. We come from all backgrounds and horizons, from all over Europe and we are actively trying to be as inclusive as possible.

What is the Conference on the Future of Europe?

The COFE is a Europe-wide participatory democracy exercise focused on the future direction and legitimacy of the European Union. Its goal is to understand the aspirations and needs of citizens across Europe to help adapt Europe to their needs, implement mid- to long term structural reforms, and bring Europe into the 21st century after a decade of crises. In other words, an ambitious grassroots socio-political re-constitution!

Find below all explanations to understand better how the conference works, and check the COFE policy process overview.

Why is it relevant for Europe?

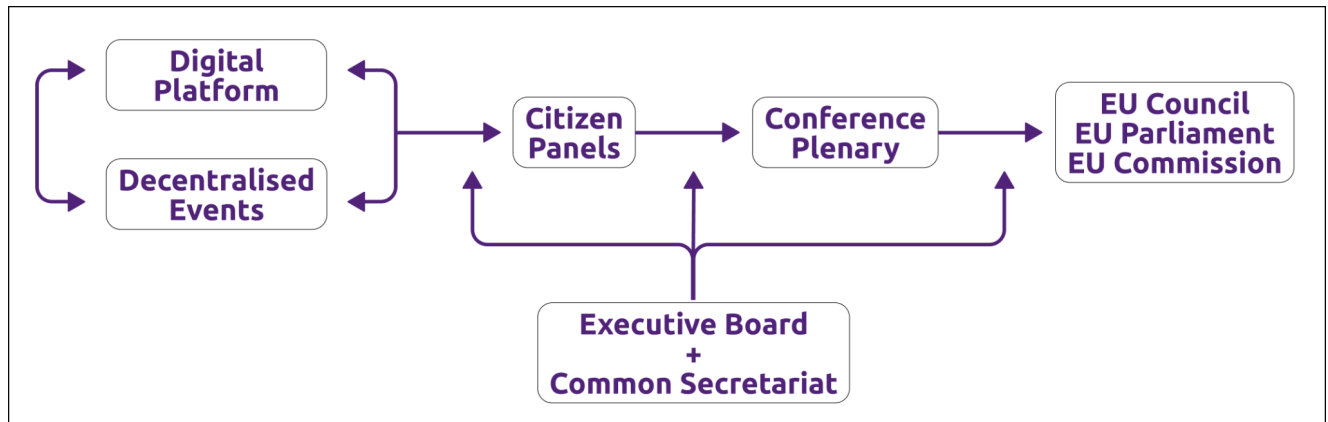
The COFE is meant to connect EU institutions with local needs and provide European citizens with an inclusive participatory tool to be heard and to have an impact on important decisions for their lives. It is based on the principles of Participatory Democracy and modelled around the Irish and French experiences with such exercises.

The COFE comes after a decade of crisis (Eurozone, Migration, Brexit, Covid-19) and a tumultuous international arena with more assertive strategic competitors (Russia, China, Turkey) and strained transatlantic and multilateral ties.

The Conference recognises that the EU's underlying rules and structures, as well as the way it connects with citizens, has not been properly updated since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, and now requires an ambitious re-boot. A more agile, responsive, relatable and ambitious EU is the

goal. The digital and green transition, protecting norms and values, as well as strengthening strategic autonomy are all key drivers of this process. COFE, if organised properly both from bottom to top, can be a precedent for a more active, deliberative European democracy with a direct link between citizen concerns and aspirations and policy implementation, perhaps even treaty change! Let's together shape the Future of Europe!

Policy COFE process journey¹



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How will COFE be organised?

The Conference will gather feedback and proposals on an ad hoc digital platform, available to all EU citizens.

It will be organized at three different levels:

- **Digital platform** is a website for EU citizens to exchange their ideas on the future of Europe, submit new solutions and proposals, as well as register events under the COFE umbrella. Ideas with the highest visibility and popularity will be then suggested for further discussion at Citizens panels level.
- **Citizens panels** will be organized by EU institutions at European level. They will consist of citizens selected randomly in a representative way in order to mimic the social structure of the EU population. Panels will work further on the ideas collected at COFE digital platform in order to propose them to the next Conference plenary level.
- **Conference plenaries** will be the last and most important body of COFE proposing official policy solutions to the EU institutions. Both citizens panels and conference plenaries structure, selection process as well as organisation is still to be decided and confirmed by the COFE organisation committee.

Who will chair COFE?

The COFE Executive Board is chaired by the representatives of the Presidents of the three EU institutions: David Sassoli (European Parliament President), António Costa (as representative of the rotating Council Presidency), and by Ursula von der Leyen (European Commission President)

¹ This is a draft based on the latest EU thinking on how to organise the COFE, yet it's organisation is not yet fully fixed.

² Policy COFE process journey chart prepared by Chris Luth

The COFE will create a hybrid constitutional assembly composed of:³

- **196 persons with voting rights:** 81 Ms, 81 MEPs, 7 from the Commission, 27 from the Council
- Observers: **32 citizens** (8 from each panel, to present the recommendation and discuss with the other participants of the plenary), 8 EESC, 8 CoR, 8 social partners, 8 civil society.

When will COFE start/end?

As a starting point the EU will hold a formal event on 9 May in Strasbourg and will hold its first Conference Plenary on 10 May, depending on the public health conditions (or subject to restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). COFE is expected to end by Spring 2022. However, COFE could become a precedent and a first permanent deliberative democracy model in the world on this scale.

For more information:

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Useful links:

[European Commission info on COFE](#)
[Volt COFE committee meeting minutes](#)
[Volt COFE shared folder](#)
[COFE portal \(Digital Platform\)](#)
[COFE joint declaration](#)
[Volt COFE Campaign - Preparing the Future of Europe!](#)

³ EP General Secretariat proposal - this is all not yet certain so this needs to be changed when its structure is clear.