



Press Release

PR211936

23.10.2021

PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in the second plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe in Strasbourg

The second plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe was held today, the 23rd of October, in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Representatives from citizens, regions, national parliaments, governments, the European Parliament and the European Commission met to debate the future of Europe. MPs Jean Claude Micallef and Joseph Ellis participated on behalf of the Maltese Parliament.

The plenary of the conference is supported by nine working groups covering the topics of the conference. The constituent meetings of the nine working groups were held on Friday, 22nd October 2021.

In the debate in the working group on education, culture, youth and sport, Mr Micallef stated that Europe should take a more thematic approach. He focused on the importance of sports, remarking that, whilst every nation competes to be the best in any discipline, more collaboration is needed for this to lead to a better lifestyle. Mr Micallef supported the proposal to subdivide the working group into clusters covering each sector making part of the working group.

During this first meeting of the working group on migration, the representatives of the citizens were encouraged to share their views on the matter on account of the bottom-up approach adopted by this conference. In his intervention, Mr Ellis noted that the EU needs to take a pragmatic approach, in particular when tackling the phenomenon of irregular migration. Despite the challenge that the EU is experiencing, it is also a fact that millions of third country nationals are admitted legally in the EU. Mr Ellis also stressed the need to revise the Dublin II Regulation to ensure burden sharing of irregular migration and to avoid a situation in which irregular immigrants have to work in the shadow economy simply because they crossed the Union's border in another member state. Mr Ellis has been appointed as a rapporteur on the working group of migration.

The discussion during the plenary session revolved around the first reactions from the European Citizens' Panels by representatives from each panel and by the Co-Chairs of the conference. Addressing the plenary, Mr Jean Claude Micallef stated that, although the delegates gathered in the plenary come from different member states, the European Union always finds its unity and strength in times of crisis. He remarked that this is the time when the EU can take on a different dimension. He stressed the importance of sports as an important tool that unites us in the fight against inequality, obesity and racism. He proposed a new EU policy on sport with the aim of improving the formation of the current and future generations, outlining the need of having two levels of sports, one on a

professional level, and the other focusing more on lifestyle across the continent, adding that sport is also an important economic sector with the potential of creating job opportunities.

Following a report by the representatives from national panels and a report from the European youth event, the afternoon session focused on the interim reports and state of play on the Multilingual Digital Platform. During the debate by the members of the plenary, Mr Ellis mentioned the positive developments of the European Union in the last decades, including the formation of the single market. He also outlined the challenges that the EU is currently facing, like climate change, competitiveness of the economies, aggression from neighbours and the emergence of new superpowers, which may harbour hegemonic designs. He also stated that the EU must not forget its past challenges, such as the 2009 financial crisis, and understand that democracies are endangered if they do not put bread on the table. These challenges demand a quick response in which the EU must use the leverage of its common strengths to ensure that tomorrow's Europe remains prosperous and a beacon of tolerance and individual liberties.

The next meeting of the Conference on the Future of Europe is scheduled to take place in Strasbourg on the 18th of December 2021.