



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

FERENC MÁDL INSTITUTE

**Keynote discussion on launching the Conference on the Future of Europe:
Perspectives for an interinstitutional agreement, expectations of the Member States
and the European institutions**

Following the unprecedented crises over the last decade, including the Brexit-referendum and more recently the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, the question for the need of a self-assessment of the European integration and the reflection on our common future has been a constant part of European public debates. In January, the European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the importance of organizing a Conference on the Future of Europe, which was shortly followed by a statement of the European Commission. After some delay due to the pandemic, the Conference is supposed to be launched during the German Presidency of the Council and possibly end during the French Presidency, in the first half of 2022. The Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament will adopt an interinstitutional agreement laying down the foundations for the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The timeliness of the Conference is undeniable. While European integration can deliver many indisputable results, recent decades have shown that our continent is vulnerable. The financial crisis, the migration crisis, the spread of terrorist attacks throughout Western European countries, the perpetual political disputes on the principle of rule of law and tensions caused by the epidemic all prove the need for a self-reflection. Recent decades have also revealed a deep ideological divide concerning the future of the European integration. The underlying question of this divide is whether European integration is for nation states or European nation states are for the process of integration *per se*. In the eyes of those who support the concept of a ‘Europe of nations’, the process of integration is an instrument, while federalists believe it to be the end goal.

The expectations related to the Conference are divergent. Some are calling for the Treaties to be amended, while others already call for caution concerning excessive expectations. The Conference will provide an opportunity to identify and discuss key issues, such as democracy in Europe, the institutional balance and the division of competences between the EU institutions and Member States, the application of the principles of sovereignty and subsidiarity, the current state and prospects of the internal market, as well as the role of the European Union as a global player in the world.

The aim of our keynote discussion is to explore and assess expectations regarding the launch, structure, organisation and process of the Conference on the Future of Europe including its eventual results. It is also essential to clarify issues such as how the organisation of the Conference will be conducted. What do Member States and EU institutions expect of the Conference, and of those who are supposed to lead it? How can Member States participate effectively and representatively in the debate? How can citizens and civil society be properly involved in the process to make their opinion heard? How can the Conference guarantee and mirror the political and cultural diversity of Europe? What organisational structure, what series of events would be most suitable for a genuinely effective dialogue?

The online conference is jointly organised by the Ministry of Justice of Hungary and the Ferenc Mádl Institute of Comparative Law, a research institute participating in the dialogue regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe, and providing an appropriate forum for the evaluation of conference-related issues.



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Online conference

25 June 2020

Keynote discussion on launching the Conference on the Future of Europe: Perspectives for an interinstitutional agreement, expectations of the Member States and the European institutions

10:00 – 11:30 **Dialogue on the Future of Europe: Member State and institutional expectations**

László TRÓCSÁNYI (moderator), Honorary President of the Ferenc Mádl Institute of Comparative Law, Member of the European Parliament

Judit VARGA, Minister of Justice of Hungary

Karoline EDTSTADLER, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery of Austria

Andreja METELKO-ZGOMBIĆ, State Secretary for European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia

Antonio TAJANI, Chair of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee, former President of the European Parliament

11:30 – 11:45 *Break*

11:45 – 13:15 **Conference with a citizen-focus: how to ensure a balanced and diverse participation of citizens?**

Márton Sulyok (moderator), Lecturer at the University of Szeged, Hungarian alternate member of the Board of the Fundamental Rights Agency

Frank Spengler, Head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Hungarian Office

Jaap de Zwaan, Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam

Ágoston Sámuel Mráz, Director of Nézőpont Institute

The conference is open to the press.