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**“Upgrading visibility of the Conference on the Future of Europe”**

**Meeting of the European Parliament delegation to the Conference on the Future of Europe Plenary**

**European Parliament, Brussels (online), 3 September 2021**

I would like to comment on recent meeting of the Executive Board.

First of all, congratulations on achieving full gender parity in the European Parliament representation in the plenary of the Conference.

On Working Groups let me say that although we try to make the groups somehow structured, it is still very important that we leave sufficient space for a free discussion and an emergence of natural dynamism of the dialogues.

In my view the Groups should have an independent personality of their own.

On Citizens' Panels the first rule should be that citizens are masters of the proceedings there. I also find it very important that we ensure that panels are supported by professional experts.

On the Platform I believe we should continue our efforts to use it in a more political way and not just as a place for presentation of individual viewpoints without a meaningful continuation of threads. This should be throughout the Conference a truly contact platform for the exchange of ideas.

On media and communication, I agree with all colleagues who have spoken. More must be done. And let us not forget that we are all politicians and we have contacts with a variety of journalists across the EU. We can bring them to the Conference.

I agree with colleagues that panels are an excellent opportunity to upgrade the visibility of the COFE.

We could also use our resources for smart sponsored articles in main stream European media that people reach out to but also exploit huge potential of truly local media like we do during our elections.

Let us also continue inviting MEPs from other member states to our home debates but also for some global issues like climate we could reach out to personalities from outside the EU.

I am worrying about the involvement of Central and Eastern Europe in the Conference. It seems to me that this is the part of the EU with the least interest in the COFE.

It is mostly localities that are involved there which is of course very important. But clearly this is not enough.

In particular I am worrying about national parliaments there but not only there. I understand they were not vocal in the last Board meeting. And we have not succeeded yet in getting them more engaged on the ground.

In many Member States they are too often and too deeply focused on nationalistic impulses and narrowly interpreted interests of their countries.

So maybe we should try as EP to get the national Parliaments better mainstreamed into the europeanization of the public space on the occasion of the COFE.