

**Professor Danuta Hübner**

**„We all bear the responsibility for getting a treaty that would give citizens a caring and truly legitimate Union”**

**UEF Event “Treaty Reform Now! Following up on CoFoE recommendations is not an option but a duty”**

**Brussels, 28.03.2023**

Conference on the Future of Europe was a one-of-a-kind and unforgettable experience. It generated a lot of ideas, fresh perspectives, new motivation but also huge responsibility for all involved. Nobody wanted less Europe.

And then, at the closing event, representatives of EP, Commission and Council made a commitment to implement citizens’ recommendations, including those requiring treaty change. You might remember that for many years, national leaders told us that citizens do not want treaty change. That taboo is gone now.

It is 15 years now since the Treaty of Lisbon and the world has changed dramatically since then. And so did Europe. Actually, the EU is a process of constant change, of small steps and grand moments of change, like those bringing to fruition the single market, Schengen or euro.

Grand changes used to be accomplished through new treaties. Today is the moment when Europe needs to make itself fit for the XXI century, change the way we organise our societies and prepare for bringing in new members.

These are grand changes.

Treaties have always codified the past reality. This time around, we need a proactive, forward-looking approach. It is true that in the years of pandemics, war and related crises we achieved a lot within the current treaty framework. But we could have been better prepared, could have decided more swiftly, we could have

done more, and acted in a more agile way, better and faster, had our treaty framework been modernized and more robust.

The Conference has been an innovative model to reform the EU. Now we need a new treaty and we need new rules for treaty change and its adoption. I would say that current treaty rules are in reality an obstacle to reforming the Union.

We could move toward a primary law model that has been on the table for decades. One consisting of a Constitutional Treaty focused on European identity, check and balances, values and basic institutional rules, to be adopted and amended if all Member States agree and ratify it, accompanied by a treaty requiring lower threshold for the approval, focused on European policies.

Of course, there is a long list of questions requiring debates and answers but there is no time to waste. We are at a critical time in Europe's history. And we all bear the responsibility for getting a treaty that would give citizens a caring and truly legitimate Union.