

The Future of Europe
A call for dialogue as a key to just transitions

V a d e m e c u m

*Three proposals for supporting the
Justice and Peace Europe 2021 Concerted Action*

Whilst fully respecting the autonomy of the national Justice and Peace Commissions with regard to the execution of the Annual Concerted Action and recognizing with gratitude all initiatives taken by individual Commissions or groups of them the ExCo of Justice and Peace Europe suggests three initiatives for the 2021 Concerted Action:

- *a contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe, in particular in the debate on human rights and Europe's role in the world*
- *a contribution to strengthen a democratic digital society in Europe*
- *participation in the 2021 Fundamental Human Rights' Forum*

The Conference on the Future of Europe

The [1 February 2021 agreement](#) in the Council of the European Union defined that “the Conference on the Future of Europe should be seen as an inclusive platform bringing together different voices engaging in a wide reflection and debate on the challenges Europe is facing and on its long-term future, including the COVID-19 pandemic”. Whatever the outcome, the Conference shall not be a first step to revise the Treaties and the “EU institutions should give priority to implementing the [Strategic EU agenda](#) from 2019”.

The Conference shall be centered around some key topics: sustainability, societal challenges (public health, territorial and generational divide), digital transformation, fundamental values and – finally – the international role of the EU. It should be an inclusive process with civil society stakeholders involved at all levels and it should build on citizen dialogues and consultations, whose results are up-loaded on a multilingual internet platform.

Its formal opening might take place on 9 May 2021 in Strasbourg. At the end of the Conference its 350 – 400 participants (from the EU institutions, national parliaments and European civil society actors) shall deliver a report to the European Council

In the context of the annual concerted action the national Justice and Peace Commissions could propose to organize citizen dialogues on Human Rights and Europe's role in the world.

Strengthening a democratic digital society in Europe

Creating an open, democratic and sustainable digital society is one of the four pillars of the [digital strategy](#) adopted by the European commission in 2018. On 3 December 2020 the European Commission presented the [European Democracy Action Plan](#). Justice and Peace Europe could follow closely and contribute to the discussion on the enhanced version of the [European Code of Practice on Disinformation](#), which is due to be published in spring 2021.

The EU Code of Practice on disinformation is the first that industry has agreed, on a voluntary basis, a set of worldwide self-regulatory standards to fight disinformation and *Fake News*. The code was signed by platforms, leading social networks, advertisers and the advertising industry in October 2018. The first signatories include Facebook, Twitter, Mozilla, Google and associations and members of the advertising industry. Microsoft subscribed to the Code of Practice in May 2019. TikTok joined the code in June 2020. They all [presented detailed roadmaps](#) to take action in 5 areas: disrupting advertising revenues of certain accounts and websites that spread disinformation; making political advertising and issue based advertising more transparent; addressing the issue of fake accounts and online bots; empowering consumers to report disinformation and access different news sources, while improving the visibility and findability of authoritative content; empowering the research community to monitor online disinformation through privacy-compliant access to the platforms' data.

Another venue could be to follow the Digital Services Act proposal. Adopted on 15 December it should among others significantly improve the mechanisms for the removal of illegal content and for the effective protection of users' fundamental rights online, including the freedom of speech. It also creates a stronger public oversight of online platforms, in particular for platforms that reach more than 10% of the EU's population

The 2021 Fundamental Human Rights' Forum

The [2021 Fundamental Human Rights' Forum](#) of the [European Fundamental Rights Agency](#) will place in Vienna on 11 and 12 October 2021. It aims to get back to basics reasserting how human rights matter. The Fundamental Rights Forum positions itself at the centre stage for human rights dialogue. It will build a vision of hope in a post-pandemic world, shaping and proposing ideas and solutions, in the face of pressing human rights challenges in the European Union and beyond. It will bring together those who strive to foster strong, inclusive and cohesive democratic societies. This includes human rights institutions, defenders and practitioners, as well as a wide range of partners and social actors, with a particular focus on youth and young people. Justice and Peace Europe should be present and participate in the event.