



FOLKETINGET

President-elect of the European Commission
Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen

15. November 2019

Dear Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your new and important post as President of the European Commission. I wish you the best of luck.

It is with great interest and pleasure that I have noticed your plans for a conference on the future of Europe. Dialogue with citizens and civil society is indeed critical to the legitimacy of political decisions and a prerequisite for a vital European democracy.

Direct involvement of national parliaments in designing and participating in a conference on the future of Europe is essential in order to create national ownership to the process as well as to the outcome. This was also the case when preparing the EU Charter of Fundamental rights and the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Hence, we find it in the natural order of things for national parliaments to be included in any board or steering committee on the conference on the future of Europe.

The Danish Parliament has a strong tradition of engaging in dialogue with citizens on European affairs. Today the Danish Parliament has an EU Information Office offering impartial information to citizens on any EU-related issue through various platforms and events. The European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament has vast experience when it comes to organizing both small and big debating events on EU-related issues. Citizens participating in these events are selected by polling institutes in order to form a representative sample of the Danish population. This model has proven very fruitful in that it has activated people who do not usually attend political debates

A copy of this letter has been sent to:
Commissioner-designate Mr. Maroš Šefčovič
Commissioner-designate Mrs. Dubravka Šuica,
The Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jeppe Kofod

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about the future of Europe – giving new insights to the political decision-makers.

The Danish Parliament would be very happy to share its experience in this field with the European Commission, the European Parliament and others and thereby contribute to design a conference on the future of Europe that generates a genuine European debate of what it takes to create a more united, stronger and democratic Union.

The European Affairs Committee of Danish Parliament believes that the following three topics would be key in any discussion about European democracy and the future of Europe:

- **Rule of law and fundamental rights and values**
The European Union is based on fundamental values and rights for our citizens. These rights and values are currently being challenged – also in the sense that civil society organisations face difficulties when participating in the democratic debate.
- **Transparency and better law making**
There is an increasing will among citizens to engage in European political debate. This was proven by the high turnout at the European Parliament elections in May 2019. However, we still need to increase transparency of the EU's decision-making in the legislative field. It is too often too difficult – even for members of national parliaments – to follow discussions about European legislative proposals. This especially includes deliberations in the Council working groups and in trilogies between the European legislators in European Parliament and the Council.
- **The role of national parliaments in European legislation**
National parliaments play a critical role in ensuring ownership and implementation of European decisions at national level. However, there is still an untapped potential when it comes to involving national parliaments in decision-making at European level. The political dialogue with the Commission was one step in the right direction. However, it needs to be further developed, for instance by agreeing with the Commission to review legislative proposals in case of substantial concerns by national parliaments. Additionally, early consultations with national parliaments on upcoming proposals would lead to better

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law making and to an increased engagement of citizens through national dialogue on EU legislation.

I sincerely hope that you will take these issues into consideration in the preparations of the conference on the future of Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Eva Kjer Hansen
Chair of the European Affairs Committee

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