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## **Conference on the Future of Europe: Verhofstadt (EU Parliament), “its success will depend on the work done in the citizens’ panels”. 800 people involved, 271 are under 25**

“The success of the Conference on the Future of Europe will depend on the work done in the citizens’ panels”: this is, according to Guy Verhofstadt, coordinator of the EP delegation, the responsibility that weighs on the shoulders of the 88 European citizens that have been carefully selected to take part in the four themed panels. The figures show that the panels will be plural and well-balanced: 271 are the young people aged 16 to 25, 270 citizens aged 26 to 54, and 262 over 55; 564 of the 800 citizens live in mid to large city centres, 237 in rural areas; 360 have an academic degree, 344 a secondary school diploma, 97 a lower level of education. Half of them are men and half are women. Italy will have 88 citizens in the workgroups: it is the second largest delegation after Germany (108) and as large as France’s one. The first panel will be meeting in Strasbourg on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> September; the others will follow closely behind, in the following three weekends. Overall, the panels will have three meetings to “outline recommendations for the future of Europe”, Verhofstadt stated. They will start their discussions by looking into a first report that summarises the over 7 thousand papers posted by the citizens on the digital platform of the Conference so far. In the panels, Verhofstadt reassured, “there will be no outside influences from politicians”, since “the chairs, experts and fact-checkers will be professionals, selected by the six organisations that the European Commission entrusted with” coordinating the panels’ work from an operational point of view. 80 citizens, 20 per panel, will be appointed to attend the plenary sessions of the Conference (the next one on 22<sup>nd</sup> October).

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