



Draft Programme

Catholic Youth Convention on the Future of Europe: 'Our Dream of Europe'

Series of 3 online events | 3 – 10 – 17 June 2021

#TheFutureIsYours

In the context of the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), the contribution of young people is fundamental to consolidate European democracy and to meet ecological, digital and inclusive transitions while recovering from the COVID-19 crisis. This is why COMECE, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU, invites young people to design a future for the EU that matches their dreams, in line with Pope Francis' [message for Europe](#).

The Catholic Youth Convention will bring together over 100 young Catholics, delegated by the Bishops' Conferences of the EU and by the COMECE Youth Platform. Together, and throughout a series of webinars, they will reflect and formulate concrete proposals on three main thematic areas: *the Just Social Recovery*, the *Ecological and Digital transitions* and *Democracy and European values*. The results will be fed into the Conference proceedings.

Each webinar will consist of an inspirational keynote speech on the respective thematic area and a 10-minute contribution from two experts. After that, participants will be asked to participate in a 45-minute session to exchange in working groups and to formulate proposals.

1) Just social recovery: Building a Europe of solidarity and fraternity

Thursday 3 June 2021, 5:00-7:00 pm

17:00-17:05: Welcome

- **H.Em. Cardinal Hollerich**, President of COMECE, tbc

17:05-17:15: Inspirational speech

- **Luca Jahier**, former President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

17:15-17:40: EU-experts introduction to debate on building a just social Europe beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Carolin Moch**, European Coordinator of the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW)
- **Laura Rayner**, Policy Analyst on EU social policy at the European Policy Centre (EPC)
- Moderated by **Alix de Wasseige**, COMECE Policy Adviser for Economic and Social policies

17:40-18:30: Working groups

Each group will focus on one of the following sub-topics, around a set of questions.

1. **Boosting Youth employment and innovation in a rapidly evolving labour market:** Why is it important for you to promote decent work for all people? How do digitalization and the COVID-19 pandemic affect youth employment? What could the EU do to address precarious working conditions and promote accessible and decent work? How to tackle in-work poverty? (Think at platform workers, etc). How can the EU support SMEs and innovation to recover from the crisis?
2. **Supporting Education, upskilling and life-long learning in the aftermath of COVID-19:** What measures shall the EU introduce to boost exchange programmes for all students and trainees in the EU? How to ensure better coordination between educational institutions and vocational education and training (VET) providers? How can we tackle the digital divide in education and foster inclusion of all in schooling and training? How to implement educational programmes for environmental sustainability?

3. **Promoting inter-generational and inter-regional solidarity in an ageing continent, leaving no one behind:** How to tackle the generational divide and promote inter-generational solidarity? How to ensure that persons, families and communities are strengthened through sound public policies and through the involvement of young and older people alike? (e.g. social welfare systems, wellbeing, community living...) How to address the rural-urban demographic, social and economic gaps in times of crisis and beyond? (e.g. reduce poverty, social inequalities, access to services...)

18:30-18:45: Reporting

- Moderated by Alix de Wasseige, COMECE

18:45-18:55: Conclusion by EU-experts

18:55-19:00: Closing by COMECE

2) Ecological and digital transitions: Caring for our Common Home

Thursday 10 June 2021, 5:00-7:00 pm

17:00-17:05: Welcome

- **Michael Kuhn**, COMECE Senior Advisor on Ecology and Sustainability

17:05-17:15: Inspirational speech

- **Josianne Gauthier**, CIDSE General Secretary

17:15-17:40: EU-experts introduction to debate on the ecological and digital transitions

- **Cinzia Verzeletti**, European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA)'s coordinator
- **Fr Eric Salobir**, President of OPTIC Technology
- Moderated by **Bernd Hirschberger**, FIMCAP Europe Co-President, member of the COMECE Youth Platform

17:40-18:30: Working groups

Each group will focus on one of the following sub-topics, around a set of questions.

1. **Integral Ecology in our lives and society:** How to ensure that EU green policies are successful and can have long-lasting just environmental and societal impact? How to shape sustainable and energy efficient housing and buildings for all, while preserving their aesthetic value? What can young people, member states and the EU do to promote integral ecology (e.g. Food and agricultural planning, sustainable transport, sustainable clothing, waste management...)
2. **Sustainable (digital) society:** What processes should we strengthen, in order to make EU economy and finance sustainable, while tackling poverty and social exclusion? (e.g. green investments, fair trade, international cooperation...) How can companies effectively contribute to corporate social sustainability? How can companies support the EU for the digital and green transitions?
3. **Protecting consumers and people digital rights:** How to envision digital policies that are inclusive and sustainable? What suggestions can be made to achieve digitalization for all and preserve our privacy, human dignity and social stability? (e.g. in regard to digital services and “gatekeepers” such Facebook, Amazon, Google; Artificial Intelligence...)

18:30-18:45: Reporting

- Moderated by **Bernd Hirschberger**, FIMCAP Europe

18:45-18:55: Conclusion by EU-experts

18:55-19:00: Closing by COMECE

- **Michael Kuhn**, COMECE

3) Democracy and European values: Shaping tomorrow's Europe

Thursday 17 June 2021, 5:00-7:00 pm

17:00-17:05: Welcome

- **Fr Manuel Barrios Prieto**, General Secretary of COMECE

17:05-17:15: Inspirational speech

- **Victoria Martin de la Torre**, Spokesperson of the S&D Group President in the European Parliament

17:15-17:40: EU-experts introduction to debate on Democracy and European values

- **Agnieszka Zarzyńska**, Institutional Development Officer at Young Caritas Europa
- **Expert 2**, tbc
- Moderated by **Emilio Dogliani**, COMECE Policy Adviser

17:40-18:30: Working groups

Each group will focus on one of the following sub-topics, around a set of questions.

1. **Democracy and youth participation:** Do you feel involved in decision-making processes? How to address current participation of EU citizens, especially young people, in EU decision-making processes? (e.g. elections) What platforms are (or would be) important to make the voices of all citizens heard and listened to? What can the EU do to make people more aware of its policies and actions? (e.g. education programmes, visibility campaigns...)
2. **Cross-border Democracy and European values:** What is the role of traditionally Christian values such as solidarity, respect and fraternity in times of peace and crisis? What policies should we envision to strengthen solidarity and cooperation on common issues within the EU? How to promote such values through education, training and youth engagement? How to tackle discrimination and extremism while preserving the beauty of our plurality, diversity and citizens' freedom of expression?
3. **Democracy, media and disinformation:** How can the EU put in place measures to counteract disinformation and fake news? How can we ensure that media remain trustworthy and misinformation does not lead to disruptions in European societies? What can be done at EU level to foster appropriate participation on social media platforms and deal with online misbehaviours

(e.g. cyberbullying)? How to ensure that media digitalization in information does not deepen inequalities and lead to exclusion or loneliness?

18:30-18:45: Reporting

- Moderated by **Emilio Dogliani**, COMECE

18:45-18:55: Conclusion by EU-experts

18:55-19:00: Closing by COMECE

- **Fr Manuel Barrios Prieto**, COMECE General Secretary