**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on Parliamentarism, European citizenship and democracy**

1. **Rapporteurs:** Alin MITUȚA (Renew / RO), Niklas NIENASS (Greens/EFA / DE)
2. **Reference numbers:** 2023/2017 (INI) / A9-0249/2023 / P9\_TA(2023)0330
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 14 September 2023
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee onConstitutional Affairs (AFCO)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution reiterates certain concerns of the Parliament in the context of parliamentarism, European citizenship and democracy, and sets out proposals in these fields.

When it comes to parliamentarism, the resolution reiterates the Parliament’s call for a direct right of legislative initiative and a strengthened right of inquiry. It calls for a genuinely bicameral system, more use of qualified majority, and activation of ‘passerelle’ clauses. The Parliament considers it necessary to introduce the possibility of triggering motions of censure against individual commissioners. The resolution also calls for the Parliament, the Council, and the Commission to continue to improve cooperation modalities with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

When it comes to European citizenship, the resolution reiterates the Parliament’s call for the creation of an EU Statute of Citizenship to clarify and consolidate citizenship-specific rights and freedoms, making EU values more tangible to citizens. It calls on the Council and Commission to take concrete steps towards the expansion of citizenship rights following the procedure under Article 25 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European union (TFEU). The resolution also stresses the need to enhance the European dimension of citizenship education and calls on the Commission to develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance citizenship competences. It calls on the Commission and the Member States to better inform ‘mobile’ EU citizens about their right to vote or stand as a candidate in municipal and European elections. It reiterates the call for the introduction of a harmonised age for the right to vote and recommends a minimum voting age of 16. The resolution expresses concern about citizenship investor schemes and disenfranchisement.

When it comes to representative democracy, the resolution calls for a swift implementation of the results of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It demands better participatory mechanisms and creating a one-stop-shop for them. It proposes the institutionalisation of certain processes based on the model of the European Citizens’ Panels. The resolution proposes in particular the creation of a structured participation mechanism, called the European Agora, starting each year in January by deliberating on the Commission’s annual work programme and the specific theme of the European Year. A youth component of the Agora should form a European Youth Assembly. The resolution also reiterates the call to evaluate the possibility of amending the EU Treaties to allow EU-wide referendums.

1. **Response to the requests in the resolution and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

Reinforcing European democracy and improving the exercise of EU citizenship rights is essential for the Commission. This also reflects the commitments made in the Commission President’s guidelines for the 2019-2024 Commission, in particular the commitment to “strive for more in nurturing, protecting and strengthening our democracy”. In this context, the Commission is also preparing a “Defence of Democracy package”, deepening certain actions announced under the European Democracy Action Plan to promote free and fair elections, to step up the fight against disinformation and to support media freedom and pluralism, including by developing civic space and citizen participation to bolster democratic resilience from within. In particular, it will include proposals to protect European democracies and strengthen trust by defending the European democratic system from outside interests.

*Parliamentarism*

The Commission agrees there is a need for the Parliament to have an adequate right of inquiry, which fully respects the institutional prerogatives and powers conferred by the Treaties to the other institutions, as well as the relevant legal frameworks of Member States. As stated on several occasions, the Commission is ready to engage in interinstitutional discussions on the 2014 proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament on the detailed provisions governing the exercise of the right of inquiry.

The Commission has also fully lived up to its political commitment to support the Parliament’s rights under Article 225 TFEU. At the same time, a general right of legislative initiative for the Parliament would require treaty change.

The Commission is in the process of putting its relations with both consultative committees on a new, enhanced basis. It renewed its Protocol on Cooperation with the Economic and Social Committee in October 2022, and is currently negotiating the renewal of the Protocol on Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions. The objective of both revisions is to agree, after 10 years of application of the old Protocols, on necessary updates and targeted improvements and to identify successful practices to intensify the political and legislative cooperation between the Commission and the Committees and make sure that their advice is delivered in a timely and targeted manner to increase its usefulness in the different phases of the policymaking cycle (**paragraph 8**).

*EU citizenship*

The Commission is committed to continue improving the exercise of EU citizenship rights. 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, which established the concept of EU citizenship. Therefore, the Commission intends to come forward with a “Citizenship Package” by the end of this year. This will include a new Citizenship Report in line with Article 25 TFEU to showcase progress achieved around EU citizenship since the adoption of the 2020 Citizenship Report. This will also include other legislative and policy actions that will achieve tangible results to advance the rights attached to the status of EU citizenship. For instance, the Commission is updating the 2009 guidance on free movement of EU citizens and their families, which will ensure a more effective and uniform application of the free movement legislation across the EU. The Commission is also preparing a revision of the consular protection Directive, to strengthen the right of EU citizens to consular protection, especially in crisis situations.

In its Communication on the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Commission indicated it would consider new areas of action in the field of European Democracy, in particular “making European citizenship more tangible to citizens, including by reinforcing the rights attached to it and by providing reliable and easily accessible information about it”. By the end of this year, the Commission will therefore also publish an “onboarding package” to further advance awareness on EU citizenship rights for “new” EU citizens (who are naturalised for instance) but also for young EU citizens who start being democratically engaged. It will further acquaint them in an attractive and easy-to-understand way with the history, values and rights that underpin their status of EU citizens, as well as illustrate how they can exercise their democratic rights. This will help make European citizenship rights more tangible for EU citizens. In addition, the Commission will carry out a communication campaign celebrating the 30th anniversary of EU citizenship, to further raise awareness and understanding among EU citizens of the rights they have, and highlight the key milestones related to EU citizenship in the last 30 years (**paragraphs 14 and 15**).

In particular in the context of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament in 2024, it is important to ensure that mobile EU citizens can fully exercise their right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and Parliament elections. In 2021, the Commission already proposed to update the directives on these rights. In cooperation with the Parliament, the Commission is also launching a communication campaign intended to increase the number of mobile EU citizens voting in the next elections. The campaign intends to encourage mobile EU citizens to register and vote by raising awareness about the registration deadlines and procedures in the home and residence countries (**paragraph 16**).

The Commission also continues to work to promote inclusiveness and to ensure that democratic and electoral rights of all EU citizens are respected and properly implemented. The Commission is therefore working closely with Member States on a ‘Guide of good electoral practice addressing participation of citizens with disabilities in the electoral process’, and a Compendium of e-voting practices to foster inclusion and democratic participation in elections, including through easily accessible and friendly to use complementary voting methods. On 23 and 24 October 2023, the Commission organised a high-level event on elections, which aimed to help empower citizens to participate as voters and candidates in the democratic process in the run up to the 2024 elections to the European Parliament.

*Complementing representative democracy through improving citizens’ participation and structured participation of citizens*

When it comes to representative and participatory democracy, the Commission agrees, as also mentioned in its Communication in follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe, that citizens must be put at the heart of European democracy. Strengthening the link between people and the democratic institutions that serve them is also key for European democracy, whether at election time or beyond.

The Commission building on the momentum created by the Conference on the Future of Europe, is actively improving its toolbox on citizens’ engagement. This includes the launch of a new generation of Citizens’ Panels, which embed participatory and deliberative processes in key moments and areas of its policymaking, with the European Citizens’ Panels becoming a “regular feature of our democratic life”. These Citizens’ Panels strengthen citizen engagement and revitalise democratic spaces. One third of the participants are young citizens between 16 and 25. The Commission is also developing a revamped ‘Have Your Say’ portal as a single entry point for online citizens’ engagement. The new portal will be the gateway for the Commission’s public online consultations, the European Citizens’ Initiatives and to a new interactive Platform, where citizens can formulate contributions on key EU policies. It will provide a unique possibility for citizens in all EU languages to express their views and thereby shape EU policies for the future.

These initiatives, together with other smaller formats of citizens’ engagement, are part of a new comprehensive approach of involving citizens in policy-making, which responds to the proposals made during the Conference calling for ensuring that citizens’ voice is heard between elections through effective participation.

As regards the call in the Parliament’s resolution for a ‘genuinely bicameral system’, the possibility of triggering motions of censure against individual commissioners and the possibility to organise EU wide referenda on fundamental matters that initiate paradigm changes in the Union’s actions and policies, the Commission notes that this suggestion would require treaty change.

As regards the call for activating the so-called ‘passerelle’ clauses in the EU Treaties, the Commission refers to its reply to the Parliament’s resolution of 11 July 2023 on ‘the implementation of the passerelle clauses in the EU Treaties’ (2022/2142 (INI)), in which the Commission expressed its support to activating passerelle clauses in key domains of certain policy areas and recalled its recommendations to activate the passerelle clauses in four Communications in 2018 and 2019. The Commission also recalls that the activation of any of the passerelle clauses would require support by all EU Member States.