



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2023)0455

The European Elections 2024

European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2023 on the European Elections 2024 (2023/2016(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and in particular Articles 10, 14 and 17(7) thereof,
- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 20 and 22 thereof,
- having regard to Council Directive 93/109/EC of 6 December 1993 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals¹,
- having regard to the report of its Committee on Constitutional Affairs of 28 April 2011 on a proposal for a modification of the Act concerning the election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage of 20 September 1976,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/673 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 May 2018 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations³,
- having regard to Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2018/994 of 13 July 2018 amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage,

¹ OJ L 329, 30.12.1993, p. 34.

² OJ C 75, 26.2.2016, p. 109.

³ OJ L 114 I, 4.5.2018, p. 1.

annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2020 on stocktaking of European elections²,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2020 entitled 'On the European democracy action plan' (COM(2020)0790),
 - having regard to its position of 3 May 2022 on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, repealing Council Decision (76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom) and the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage annexed to that decision³,
 - having regard to the amendments adopted by the European Parliament on 15 September 2022 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations⁴,
 - having regard to the amendments adopted by the European Parliament on 2 February 2023 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transparency and targeting of political advertising⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 September 2023 on Parliamentarism, European citizenship and democracy⁶,
 - having regard to European Council Decision (EU) 2023/2061 of 22 September 2023 establishing the composition of the European Parliament⁷,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A9-0332/2023),
- A. whereas the 2019 European elections registered the highest turnout of any elections to the European Parliament in the last 20 years, at 50,66 % of the electorate, (an increase of eight percentage points on 2014), sending a positive signal that European citizens are taking an

¹ OJ L 178, 16.7.2018, p. 1.

² OJ C 425, 20.10.2021, p. 98.

³ OJ C 465, 6.12.2022, p. 171.

⁴ OJ C 125, 5.4.2023, p. 485.

⁵ OJ C 267, 28.7.2023, p. 36.

⁶ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0330.

⁷ OJ L 238, 27.9.2023, p. 114.

increasing interest in developments at EU level and that they believe that EU legislation has an impact on their daily lives; whereas 19 Member States reported rising national turnouts, with significant increases compared to 2014 recorded in Poland, Romania, Spain, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Slovakia and Czechia;

- B. whereas the 2018 Council Decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage included some improvements such as the addition of the logos of European political parties in the ballots for elections to the European Parliament; whereas it remains to be ratified by all Member States; whereas the proposed European Electoral Law adopted by the European Parliament on 3 May 2022, which contains major improvements, would address the current fragmentation into 27 different electoral systems and would make electoral rules more modern and uniform within the EU;
- C. whereas the lead candidate system could foster the European public debate and empower European political parties;
- D. whereas the 2019 European elections did not culminate in the choice of a President of the Commission through the lead candidate system; whereas the lack of a reform of the European electoral law was an additional obstacle to the successful implementation of the lead candidate process; whereas this failure to implement the lead candidate system has led to disappointment among many voters and reduced trust in the process; whereas such a disappointment must be avoided at the 2024 European elections; whereas the election of the Commission President depends on securing the support of the majority of Members of the European Parliament;
- E. whereas the effective implementation of the lead candidate system requires that Parliament be able to indicate a common candidate for President of the Commission before the proposal by the European Council;
- F. whereas several Member States have still not adequately addressed persistent barriers and have not implemented appropriate arrangements to facilitate voting by citizens with disabilities, thus preventing the meaningful participation and representation of these citizens in democratic processes;
- G. whereas the full exercise of the electoral rights granted by the Treaties to mobile citizens in elections to the European Parliament is still hampered by unjustified barriers to democratic participation, including a lack of awareness about the conditions and rules applicable; whereas the Commission has issued a legislative proposal addressing some of these concerns;
- H. whereas political campaigns for the European elections conducted in the Member States are too often insufficiently 'European', but are

instead dominated by policy discussions of a purely national, regional and local nature; whereas political parties and candidates have the responsibility to adequately inform citizens about the policy challenges at EU level;

Strengthening European democracy at the 2024 election

1. Welcomes the higher turnout in the 2019 European elections and strives to work on further increasing the turnout at the 2024 European elections; stresses the importance of increasing participation in the elections; notes that further efforts are needed to increase the turnout among mobile citizens; regrets the lack of progress by the Council towards the adoption of the new European electoral law as adopted by the European Parliament on 3 May 2022; calls for its swift approval by the Council; expects the Council to reach a compromise with consensus on the entirety of Parliament's proposal;
2. Emphasises the important role of European political parties and all relevant societal stakeholders in contributing to the debate on European public policy issues and in forming European political awareness; regrets, however, that restrictions under the current EU and national regulatory frameworks prevent European political parties from fully participating in European election campaigns; encourages European political parties to conduct their own European elections campaigns; calls on national and European political parties, as well as, where applicable, the Member States:
 - to conduct the European election campaign in line with Union values,
 - to uphold democratic standards and internal party democracy rules in order to ensure in particular that the nomination of candidates is pursued in a democratic manner, including the lead candidates for President of the European Commission,
 - to draft manifestos in good time ahead of the elections,
 - to enhance the visibility of European political parties in public debates and media campaigns, including their names and/or logos,
 - to consistently identify their European counterparts in their public communications,
 - to support the names and/or logos of the European political parties being made visible on ballots and campaign materials,
 - to raise awareness about the newly drafted rules for European political parties and European political foundations before they formally enter into force,

- to reach an agreement on how to proceed during the post-electoral process, including on the negotiations on the presidents of the Union institutions;
- 3. Supports the European Campaign Action Plan ('E-CAP') as drafted by the Authority for Political Parties and Political Foundations (APPF), in particular regarding the visibility of lead candidates and European political parties; stresses the importance of the APPF's work in informing citizens;
- 4. Regrets that the lead candidate system for the election of the President of the European Commission was not implemented at the 2019 European elections; regrets further a lack of progress on this issue since 2019 by the European Council and the European Commission, who had committed to improve European democracy; believes that a clear and credible link between the choice of voters and the election of the Commission President is needed; calls on the European political parties, national political parties and national governments to work together to ensure this outcome at the next elections; points out that the election of the Commission President depends on securing the support of the majority of Members of the European Parliament so that the electoral results are fully taken into account, as envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty;
- 5. Calls on the European Council to provide certainty on the lead candidate system to European citizens and to put a stop to deals behind closed doors; urges the European Council to begin consultations for this purpose well in advance with a view to implementing the lead candidate principle in the light of the outcome of the European elections;
- 6. Expects all European political parties to nominate their candidates for the position of President of the Commission in due time, at least 12 weeks before election day;
- 7. Calls for the establishment of an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament and the European Council on the lead candidate system within the framework of Article 17(7) TEU; asks the President of the European Parliament to immediately start the preparatory work leading to such an agreement; believes that the lead candidates and the presidents of the European political parties and of their respective parliamentary groups should engage in negotiations immediately after the 2024 European elections to agree on behalf of the European Parliament on a common candidate to preside over the Commission before the European Council makes its proposal;
- 8. Considers that the lead candidate of the European political party that has obtained the largest share of seats in the elections to the European Parliament must in the first instance lead the negotiations to identify the common candidate with the largest majority, followed,

if needed, by the other lead candidates in this effort, in proportion to the share of seats obtained by their respective European political parties; proposes that the President of the European Parliament must, if needed, be available to steer this process;

9. Underlines that it will be the prerogative of the President of the European Parliament to communicate the name of Parliament's common candidate for the position of President of the European Commission to the European Council;
10. Recommends that, in the absence of a common candidate of the European Parliament for President of the Commission, the President of the European Council must engage in consultations with the President of the European Parliament, the lead candidates, the presidents of the European political parties and of their respective parliamentary groups, in advance of the proposal by the European Council to the European Parliament;
11. Considers, to this effect, that the European Council should wait with its proposal for President of the European Commission for the European Parliament to have presented a common candidate, in accordance with the appropriate consultations referred to in Article 17(7) TEU and the principle of sincere cooperation;
12. Recalls the prerogative of the European Parliament to choose its own President;
13. Expects that the European political parties and their parliamentary groups adopt a 'legislature agreement' for the legislative period 2024-2029 as a way of securing a majority in Parliament ahead of the appointment of the Commission, as a basis for its work programme and a guarantee, to European voters, of a coherent follow-up to the elections; each candidate to the European Commission must subscribe to this 'legislature agreement' in order to obtain Parliament's majority support; notes that broad political support is crucial for the implementation of such an agreement;
14. Believes that establishing a single common European voting day would create a more coherent pan-European election;
15. Recalls the responsibility of political oversight conferred on Parliament by the Treaties; stresses that the Commission's accountability to Parliament constitutes an important principle of internal democratic control; recalls that the hearings of the Commissioners-designate and of the College of Commissioners are a critical step towards further democratisation of the EU decision-making process and are gaining in significance as a means for Parliament to take a greater role in agenda-setting at EU level;

Citizens' participation and enfranchisement

16. Considers it essential to guarantee that all citizens of the Union who have the right to vote and stand as a candidate, including mobile Union citizens, citizens with disabilities and citizens in a situation of homelessness, are able to exercise that right;
17. Calls on the Member States to guarantee the accessibility of the elections through the introduction of measures aimed at ensuring access to information and accessible voting arrangements – for instance the use of assistive technologies, formats and techniques like Braille, QR codes, large print, audio-based information, tactile stencils, easy-to-read information and sign language communication; believes that public awareness campaigns are key to increasing turnout and calls on the Member States to make every effort in this regard, also involving civil society organisations;
18. Considers that access to information about the election campaign is a necessary condition for improving citizens' participation in the election; calls on the Member States to encourage their national media to cover the elections in such a way as to enable European citizens to exercise their right to vote and to perceive the European dimension of their choice, including in rural areas;
19. Believes that Parliament's institutional information campaign contributes, in liaison with civil society organisations, to the debate on European public policy issues and to forming European political awareness about parliamentary democracy and comes as a support to the electoral campaign led by all European political parties; welcomes the coordinated efforts made by all EU institutions in this regard;
20. Reiterates its call on Member States to allow all citizens of the Union living or working in a third country to be granted the right to cast their vote in elections to the European Parliament; invites the Member States to work hand in hand with the European Parliament and the European External Action Service to inform citizens of the Union in third countries about the European elections and to facilitate their participation in these elections; calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to encourage the foreign ministers of the Member States to exchange best practices for information campaigns and to facilitate arrangements for voting from abroad, including the establishment of accessible polling stations outside the EU and the use of postal or other forms of remote voting;
21. Regrets that the lack of progress in the Council on the Commission proposal for a Council directive laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for mobile Union citizens will prevent the entry into force of the innovations put forward by the Commission and Parliament in time for the 2024 elections;

22. Encourages the introduction of postal voting to ensure that the inability to go to the polling stations on Election Day does not prevent citizens of the Union from exercising their right to vote; further advocates introducing complementary tools to facilitate voting, such as advance physical voting and proxy voting, as well as electronic and online voting;
23. Considers gender equality to be a key element for improving representation in elections; welcomes the progress made towards a gender-balanced Parliament following the 2019 European elections, but underlines the existing disparities between Member States with regard to their levels of representation of women; encourages, in this regard, the implementation of the provisions adopted by Parliament on 3 May 2022 on the new European electoral law;
24. Believes that Member States should consider aligning and lowering the voting age and the minimum age for standing as a candidate, as indicated in the electoral law proposal and the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe;

Institutional resilience

25. Believes that disinformation and foreign interference constitute a serious attack on the integrity of the electoral process and on European democracy; stresses that digital platforms have an essential role in the fight against disinformation;
26. Acknowledges the efforts made by the EU institutions to tackle disinformation and foreign interference, such as the 2022 Code of Practice on Disinformation and the Rapid Alert System; highlights, nonetheless, the need for more robust safeguards and measures against disinformation and internal and external interference in the electoral process; commits to step up its efforts in combating foreign interference attempts within the European Parliament;
27. Points to the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European political parties and foundations; calls on the Commission and the Council to pursue interinstitutional negotiations in the spirit of sincere cooperation; welcomes the agreement reached by the co-legislators on a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the transparency and targeting of political advertising; welcomes the enforceability of some of its provisions, such as those on non-discrimination, ahead of the 2024 elections; calls on the Member States to fully implement the other provisions of the regulation once they enter into force;
28. Recalls that Parliament has adopted a resolution and is currently working on proposals for the amendment of the Treaties, among others, to increase the EU's democratic legitimacy and to allow a proper follow-up to the proposals adopted by the Conference on the

Future of Europe; notes that the 2024 elections represent a unique occasion to commence an EU-wide debate on the reform of the Union on the basis of the proposals for the reform of the Treaties put forward by Parliament; calls on the European Council to expeditiously adopt a position on the holding of a convention after the adoption by Parliament of its proposals; reiterates its support for a reform of the Treaties in this context;

29. Calls for a reform of the Treaties and urges the Council and, ultimately, the European Council to act on its proposal to trigger Article 48 TEU in order to establish a convention;
30. Highlights the need to strengthen the electorate's confidence in electoral processes by ensuring that all elections are free and fair; notes, in this regard, that from 6 to 9 November 2023, the OSCE conducted a Needs Assessment Mission in four Member States to look into the preparation of a Mission to observe the European elections; suggests to the Council Presidency to encourage the Member States to send letters of invitation to the OSCE to observe the European elections and to make full use of this possibility;
31. Asks its Committee of Constitutional Affairs to examine whether some of the provisions and recommendations of this resolution could be incorporated into Parliament's Rules of Procedure;
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32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.