

RESOLUTION ON EUROPE OF FREEDOMS

The Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies,

Building on the proximity of the Regional Parliaments to the citizens of the European Union;

Having regard to the principle of subsidiarity, enshrined in particular in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union;

Referring to the Oviedo Declaration of 1997, a founding act of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies, which states that the regional, national and European levels must be intertwined in order to properly apply the democratic principle within the European Union;

Having regard to the revised version of the Oviedo Declaration adopted on 7 October 2022 in the framework of the 25th anniversary of the Conference;

Having regard to the fundamental rights of European citizens, notably enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

Mindful of the values of the European Union, enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, in particular freedom, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, pluralism, non-discrimination and justice;

Taking into account the Commission's Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Democracy Action Plan of 3 December 2020;

Having regard to the Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on the contribution of local and regional authorities to the Conference on the Future of Europe of 27 January 2022, and in particular point 14 thereof;

Bearing in mind the challenges facing the rule of law, human rights and democracy caused by the increase in the number of authoritarian regimes in the world;

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the EU budget;

Stressing the impact of the measures taken in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable in society but also on a significant number of fundamental rights;

Taking note of the Special Report of the European Court of Auditors on misinformation concerning the European Union:

Supports any concrete initiative aimed at promoting democracy in Europe and especially the role of Regional Parliaments in representing and building a common sense of European belonging;

Recalls that the values of the European Union and the fundamental rights of individuals must remain paramount and guide all policies established at European Union level but also at national, regional and local levels;

Reaffirms the importance of the role of Regional Parliaments in monitoring and consolidating the principle of subsidiarity in order to ensure optimal levels of efficiency and transparency in the European decision-making process;

Calls for the necessary involvement of the Regional Legislative Assemblies in discussions on the shaping of European policies to be implemented in their region, in order to avoid seeing them reduced to mere rubber-stamping assemblies;

Recalls that one of the roles of Regional Parliaments is to act as a mouthpiece for citizens in order to strengthen the democratic principle underlying the European Union and its participatory dynamics and to establish multi-level governance that gives due consideration to the place of regional democracy in the European democratic process;

Calls for greater vigilance by European legislators regarding the financing of political parties and foundations by players from third countries, with the aim of minimising the risk of foreign interference in European democratic processes;

Welcomes initiatives to combat misinformation practices, particularly on the Internet, and the threats they pose to democracy and the fundamental rights of individuals;

Welcomes the European Commission's proposals to make the fight against online misinformation more effective, in particular by introducing monitoring of the practices of digital players and establishing a Transparency Centre;

Encourages policy-makers at all levels of government to work towards the implementation of media education policies, particularly new media, designed to equip European citizens with tools to enable them to approach information online with the critical literacy skills necessary for free thought;

Welcomes the European Commission's proposal to make online political advertisements more transparent by labelling them as such, but also by publicising the amounts and sources of funding injected for their dissemination;

Welcomes the European Commission's proposal to prohibit targeting based on sensitive personal data, such as ethnic origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation, without the user's consent;

Welcomes the initiatives aimed at developing quality digital infrastructures for widespread connectivity and smart territories in order to overcome the different levels of competitiveness, particularly in marginal areas;

Encourages any initiative aimed at enabling all journalists in the European Union to exercise their profession safely and freely, in order to allow the flow of information within European societies and secure informed democratic participation, whether or not they operate on European soil.

Done in Namur, 17 November 2022