

RESOLUTION ON THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Drawing on the importance of European elections as a fundamental pillar of European democracy;

Drawing on the crucial role played by regional parliaments in defending regional interests, ensuring that the diverse needs of the regions are taken into account and acting as liaison between citizens and the institutions of the European Union;

With reference to the 1997 Oviedo Declaration, the founding act of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies, which states that the regional, national and European levels must be interlinked in order to apply the democratic principle effectively within the European Union;

Mindful of CALRE's principal missions, namely the defence and promotion of democracy, and the importance of the role played by regional legislative assemblies in this respect;

Aware 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;

Aware of the work carried out by the European Parliament's special committees on foreign interference and disinformation, which have stepped up efforts to combat disinformation and encourage regions and local authorities to play a leading role in contacts with local populations, with a view to securing the interest and trust of citizens;

Bearing in mind the far-reaching consequences of the European elections, including the appointment of a new Commission;

Stressing that future elections will take place against a backdrop of increasing challenges, particularly the impacts of the Covid pandemic, which has undermined public confidence in political institutions;

Having regard to the role played by legislation and, more specifically, the recent code of practice signed by the major social media platforms, in which they pledge to take action against disinformation;

Taking note of other European legislation such as the Artificial Intelligence Act, the Media Freedom Act and the Digital Services Act, which enable greater transparency and accountability for the benefit of the public;

Pointing out that the primary objective is to prevent the manipulation of information, not to censor it or reduce it to a single perspective;

Pointing out that the subject of disinformation should be linked to the forthcoming European elections because it affects public confidence;

Stressing the difficulty of regulating disinformation, given the importance attached to the fundamental value of freedom of expression;

Having regard to the ongoing discussions in the European Parliament on potential legislation on the transparency of political advertising, which will improve the protection of European elections;

Concerned about the threats of disinformation, foreign interference and outside attempts to influence election results, as well as the danger of foreign interference in information on Western issues;

Stressing that new technologies have redefined the size, nature and scope of foreign interference operations, making them dangerous for any democracy, and that advances in artificial intelligence (AI) will potentially extend the reach and effectiveness of foreign interference operations;

Taking into account the polarisation of the political landscape resulting from the war in Ukraine, which increases the level of threat to democratic processes in the Union;

Having regard to the role of regional parliaments in implementing the principle of subsidiarity, enabling decisions to be taken at the level closest to the citizen;

Taking into account the European Parliament resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (2020/2268(INI)), which analyses, among other things, the threat of foreign interference in all its forms, including disinformation and the manipulation of social media platforms and advertising systems, and proposes recommendations aimed at strengthening the EU's resilience to disinformation and foreign interference;

Having regard to the European Parliament's report on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (2022/2075(INI)), which contains recommendations and updates on the EU's coordinated strategy;

The Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies

Commends the European institutions for taking on board concerns about a lack of public confidence after the 2019 elections and the presence of outside interference;

Affirms the added value of collective action to restore public confidence and resilience in the face of the challenges posed by the European elections;

Highlights the importance of protecting and promoting the value of democracy which is common to CALRE and the European Parliament;

Stresses the importance of parliaments for democracy, despite current tendencies to call them into question;

Acknowledges the growing commitment of citizens, particularly following the difficulties encountered by many of them as a result of recent crises;

Calls on the regional assemblies to step up their cooperation with a view to sharing best practice and strengthening their influence with the European institutions;

Encourages cooperation between the European Parliament and CALRE to maximise public engagement, which is in the common interest of both institutions;

Supports all practical initiatives aimed at promoting democracy in Europe and, in particular, the role of regional parliaments in representing and building a common sense of belonging to Europe ;

Encourages regional parliaments to engage actively in dialogue and negotiations to promote the interests of their regions at EU level;

Welcomes initiatives aimed at combating disinformation practices, particularly on the Internet, and the threats they pose to democracy;

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

Encourages political decision-makers at all levels of government to work towards the implementation of media literacy policies, in particular for new media, aimed at enabling European citizens to approach online information with the critical mind necessary for free thought;

Calls for the raising of citizens' awareness of European elections and increasing the visibility of regional assemblies as key players in European democracy to promote the active participation of citizens;

Welcomes initiatives aimed at combating disinformation practices, particularly on the Internet, and the threats they pose to democracy and the fundamental rights of individuals.

Concluded in Brussels, on