Stocktaking of European elections

2020/2088(INI) - 26/11/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 468 votes to 194, with abstentions, a resolution on stocktaking of European elections.

Continuing the upward trend in turnout at European elections

Parliament welcomed the increased participation, especially of young people, in the 2019 European elections, which shows the possibility of reversing the downward trend in turnout in Europe. It is confident that the trend of growing voter turnout can be repeated if the connection and accountability between voters and candidates are strengthened and EU-wide challenges and political programmes are debated across Member States.

Members welcomed the fact that the gender balance in Parliament has improved following the last elections, although there is still room for improvement, as some have elected more than 50% women, while others have not elected a single woman as a Member of the European Parliament.

The resolution also noted that only a few Members belong to ethnic, linguistic or other minorities, that Roma face particular difficulties in the area of political participation, and that an estimated 800 000 citizens with disabilities were unable to vote in 2019 due to national rules.

Parliament called on Member States to ensure that all their nationals who enjoy the right to vote, including EU citizens living outside their country of origin, homeless people and prisoners who are granted this right under national law, can exercise it.

Improving the electoral process

Despite the fact that the agreed reform of the electoral law has not yet been ratified by some Member States, Parliament has recommended that the following elements be examined with a view to improving the European electoral process, in particular in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe:

- new remote voting methods for citizens during European elections in specific or exceptional circumstances;

- common election admission rules for candidates and common campaign and funding rules;

- harmonised standards for passive and active voting rights across Member States, including a reflection on decreasing the minimum age of voters in all Member States to 16;

- provisions on periods of absence for Members, for example in the case of maternity leave, parental leave or severe illness.

Parliament also called on the Commission and the Council to take all necessary measures to effectively combat foreign interference and the internal and external dimensions of disinformation, to engage in an active dialogue with the Parliament's new special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation (INGE Committee), and to take full account of its conclusions as soon as it has delivered them and before the next European elections.

Strengthening the European dimension of elections

Members noted that Spitzenkandidaten process failed to produce a President of the European Commission after the 2019 elections, partly due to a lack of explanation and understanding of the process by EU citizens.

Parliament wants to reform the democratic process for choosing the Commission President before the next European elections in 2024. However, it stressed that the election of the Commission President still depends on obtaining the support of a majority of Members of the European Parliament, so that the election results are fully taken into account, as provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon.

Members insisted that all European voters should be allowed to vote for their preferred candidate for the Commission president. Therefore, that the Spitzenkandidaten should be able to stand as official candidates at the next elections in all Member States, elected by a European political party and standing for a unified European electoral programme.

In view of the proportional electoral system of the EU, the election of the President of the European Commission should depend on his or her ability to gain support from a majority of Members of the European Parliament.

Parliament supported a coordinated strategy at EU level for media coverage of the European elections, notably by ensuring that the political agendas of the different European political forces are debated, that candidates standing for the European elections in different Member States are invited and that campaign events are covered.