

## Resolution 900 (1988)<sup>1</sup>

# Access to the audiovisual media during election campaigns

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that the principles of true democracy can be upheld only if there is respect for human rights, and in particular for freedom of expression and information which is a fundamental component of those democratic principles ;
2. Recalling the information report on public opinion polls presented by its Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations ([Doc. 5449](#)) ;
3. Considering that the Council of Europe guarantees the right to freedom of expression and information in Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;
4. Considering that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has on many occasions stressed the need to guarantee freedom of expression as an essential right in every democratic society ;
5. Considering that it is more necessary than ever, when elections are being held, to safeguard political pluralism and equality of opportunity which should include a right to reply between all political groups and parties ;
6. Aware that political pluralism, equality of opportunity and free access to radio and television during election campaigns are possible only if genuine democratic controls operate over these media ;
7. Aware of the vital role which these media play during elections as a means of directly influencing the electorate ;
8. Considering that, in order to safeguard democratic principles, these media must be independent ;
9. Convinced that free, democratic elections require public media as the only guarantee of equality of opportunity and the free access of all political parties to the media,
10. Invites the governments of the member states to ensure that :
  - a. the democratic principles set forth above on access of political parties and political groups to the media during election campaigns are guaranteed ;
  - b. genuine equality of opportunity is clearly established during elections for all political parties, whose treatment must be in keeping with their social and political representativeness, which should be assessed essentially on the basis of the votes obtained at the previous elections by universal suffrage to legislative assemblies ;
  - c. there is a clear recognition of the fact that freedom of expression in free and democratic elections can only be secured through mass media that are diversified and independent ;
  - d. pluralism of information is guaranteed in the public media so that the population can be objectively informed about all the political options presented to it in elections ;

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1. Assembly debate D 5 May 1988 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 5766](#), report of the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations, Rapporteur : Mr Guerra ; [Doc. 5866](#)[Doc. 5866](#), complementary report ; and [Doc. 5798](#), opinion of the Legal Affairs Committee (Rapporteur : Mr Rodota'). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 May 1988 (7th Sitting).



11. Instructs its Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations, in co-operation with the Legal Affairs Committee and the Political Affairs Committee, to enlarge the scope and detail of their investigation of access to audiovisual media to cover periods when elections are not taking place, so that objectivity and impartiality may be permanently assured.