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06 October 2015

## The political rights of persons with disabilities: a democratic issue

### Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Mechthild RAWERT and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life is guaranteed by human rights international treaties. It is an essential element of their right to be part of the societies where they live. In 2011, the European Commission for Democracy through Law reiterated that persons with disabilities should not be excluded from universal suffrage and should be able to stand for elections on an equal basis with other citizens. This equality, both in voting and in standing for election, should be ensured by means of reasonable accommodations. Voting procedures, facilities and materials should be appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use.

The exercise of political rights is also too often linked to the issue of legal capacity. In a very large number of European States, a person subject to guardianship is no longer allowed to vote or to stand for election. In the European Union, only seven States do not link the right to vote to legal capacity. A consequence of the denial of legal capacity is that the person disappears from public life as a citizen. This situation is denounced by NGOs as amounting to a civil death.

Persons with disabilities should no longer be considered as second-class citizens and their right to participate in political and public life should be better protected. The Parliamentary Assembly should examine how Council of Europe member States guarantee the political rights of persons with disabilities and recommend ways to better comply with the current international standards.

*Signed (see overleaf)*



*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

RAWERT Mechthild, Germany, SOC  
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BİLGEHAN Gülsün, Turkey, SOC  
BLONDIN Maryvonne, France, SOC  
BONET PEROT Sílvia Eloïsa, Andorra, SOC  
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CHRISTOFFERSEN Lise, Norway, SOC  
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UNGURYAN Pavlo, Ukraine, EPP/CD  
VILLUMSEN Nikolaj, Denmark, UEL  
VORUZ Eric, Switzerland, SOC  
WURM Gisela, Austria, SOC

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EC: European Conservatives Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
SOC: Socialist Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left