Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Towards a system of monitoring and regulation to counter misinformation in and manipulation by social media

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Lord George FOULKES 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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Social media is one of the most important arenas for political debate; it has expanded rapidly and has become highly influential in swaying public opinion. Therefore, it is of extreme concern that social media spreads misinformation and is misused as a tool of manipulation, while regulation and control in this area are either negligible or non-existent.

This situation is not only threatening the political processes in our democratic societies, but is also preventing the public from being informed in a proper and balanced manner.

The Parliamentary Assembly should inquire into:

– how social media is being misused, hijacking the fundamental principle of freedom of speech;

– how search engines (i.e. the algorithms behind the search engines) can be designed to favour particular causes, thus manipulating users;

– the mismatch between the use of polls in mainstream media and the capacity of social media to misinform and manipulate;

– how to counter disinformation and manipulation channeled through social media.

The Assembly should consider these matters with a view to making recommendations on the introduction of:

– binding rules for the use of social media to prevent and eventually neutralise misinformation and manipulation;

– a system of monitoring with severe sanctions for contravening agreed rules.

These recommendations should be elaborated with due regard to the fundamental principle of freedom of information, which is to be guaranteed whatever the media or technological platform.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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ARIEV Volodymyr, Ukraine, EPP/CD
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COAKER Vernon, United Kingdom, SOC
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GALE Roger, United Kingdom, EC
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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
FDG: Free Democrats Group
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group