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Need for democratic governance of artificial intelligence

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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

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There is a growing consensus that artificial intelligence will be a determining factor for the future of humanity as it will substantially transform individual lives and impact on human societies. While artificial intelligence may generate great opportunities in advancing economic and social progress, it also presents complex challenges.

Artificial intelligence is already influencing the functioning of democracy (interference in electoral processes, personalised political targeting, predicting and shaping voters' political behaviour, quick spreading of misinformation through social media to manipulate public opinion). Also, concentration of power in the hands of a few big private actors, beyond democratic oversight, is a cause for concern.

Moreover, the broad use by States of artificial intelligence-based technologies to control citizens such as automated filtering of information amounting to censorship, and mass surveillance using smartphones and CCTV coupled with vast integrated databases, may lead to the erosion of political freedoms and the emergence of digital authoritarianism – a new social order competing with democracy.

There is an urgent need to set up national and international regulatory frameworks to ensure democratic governance of artificial intelligence and prevent its misuse.

The Parliamentary Assembly should adopt a holistic approach, consider challenges and opportunities related to artificial intelligence in diversity and present a consolidated position with comprehensive proposals by all concerned committees.

The Committee of Ministers recently adopted the Declaration on the manipulative capabilities of algorithmic processes. The Finnish Presidency organised in Helsinki the high-level conference "Governing the Game Changer – Impacts of artificial intelligence development on human rights, democracy and the rule of law". Various Council of Europe entities work on different aspects of artificial intelligence, and the drafting of a new legal instrument is being considered.

The Assembly should be involved at an early stage in discussions on, and the drafting of, future legal instruments ensuring democratic governance of artificial intelligence.