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

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Risks and opportunities of the Metaverse

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Olivier FRANÇAIS 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 word "Metaverse", meaning "beyond the universe", was coined in the 90s and identifies the virtual worlds that exist in parallel to the physical one. This network of immersive 3D virtual worlds can be experienced by an unlimited number of users with an individual sense of presence. Users interacting via avatars, can carry out most, if not all, daily activities emulating the real world, and are involved in the creation and the evolution of virtual worlds.

The increasing presence of people, institutions and businesses in the Metaverse is likely to have a great impact on cultural and social dynamics, including the world of services, business, science, education, employment, health, art and entertainment. The Metaverse will offer opportunities for new forms of work, education, communication and democratic participation, but will also entail increased risks for human rights and may threaten the functioning of democratic institutions, including through lobbying, mindset control, misinformation, state surveillance and voter manipulations.

A few giant tech companies, which are *de facto* not accountable for their decisions, hold a concentration of power and control the whole system, with limited concern for the dignity, safety, physical and psychological health, equality, non-discrimination and the protection of human rights, including the right to freedom of information and association, data protection and privacy of all users, especially the most vulnerable or marginalised groups. Non-state actors could also play a significant role on the platform to the detriment of our free societies.

The Parliamentary Assembly should analyse the issues at stake, including the role that the Council of Europe could play in the Metaverse, review existing systems and standards both in its design and use, and provide recommendations to member States on how to ensure the protection and promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, including via this new and potentially revolutionary technology.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group