Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Strengthening democracy through participatory and deliberative processes

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr George PAPANDREOU and other members of the Assembly

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

Representative democracy is the foundation of European democratic systems: by electing their representatives at local, regional and national level, citizens play an active role in the political life of the member States of the Council of Europe. In the past years, however, electoral turnouts in several countries have shown downward trends, at least partially explained by citizens' disenchantment with their governments, and the feeling that they do not have a voice in decision-making.

Participatory and deliberative democracy processes can strengthen the contribution of citizens to the public debate and through their collective wisdom enrich the process and better the outcome of political decision-making concerning issues directly affecting them. This in turn will generate decisions and policies that are owned, fair and legitimate, ultimately contributing to the restoration of trust in the political system.

On this subject, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 2212(2021) "More participatory democracy to tackle climate change", and the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation CM/REC(2023)6 on deliberative democracy, inviting member States to implement deliberative processes and suggesting principles of deliberative democracy to be applied when designing them.

The Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, during their 4th Summit held in May 2023, also took a decisive position with the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, declaring that member States would "actively enable and encourage democratic participation at national, regional and local levels through free and fair elections. As appropriate, forms of participatory democracy, including deliberative democracy, may be encouraged".

Considering these recent developments, the Assembly should further analyse the possibilities offered by participatory and deliberative initiatives to strengthen civil participation and citizens' engagement in decision making, identify and compare best practices in Europe and formulate concrete proposals to encourage their adoption in Council of Europe member States and beyond.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
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