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21 November 2023

Elections in times of crisis

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Damien COTTIER and other members of the Assembly

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

Free elections by secret ballot, held at regular intervals under conditions that ensure free expression by the electorate, are the foundation of representative democracy.

In recent years, a number of crises have had an impact on the holding and the conduct of elections. The occurrence of events as diverse as terrorist attacks, the Covid-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and a full-blown state of war have prompted experts, legislators and election professionals to reflect on how to strengthen the resilience of democratic institutions in the face of crisis situations, including in the electoral field.

The parliamentary conference on "Elections in times of crisis: challenges and opportunities", organised by the Parliamentary Assembly in co-operation with the Swiss Parliament on 9 and 10 May 2023 in Bern, marked an important step in this reflection. In addition to examining the aforementioned emergency situations, the conference addressed challenges specific to the digital age in electoral processes. It also addressed the issue of organising elections in Ukraine, when conditions permit, and the role that the Council of Europe could play in this regard.

In the wake of the importance attached to democracy by the Reykjavík Summit, and with a view of giving concrete expression to the wishes and commitments by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States in the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, the Assembly should adopt a resolution based on the recommendations of the Bern Conference. It should also encourage the Committee of Ministers to give greater visibility, coherence and impact to the Council of Europe's work on the electoral cycle.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group