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Integrity of electoral registers in Council of Europe member States with high emigration rates: the need for digital modernisation

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Marijana PULJAK and other members of the Assembly

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

In several Council of Europe member States, particularly those that have experienced significant emigration after European Union accession, electoral registers have become substantially inflated in comparison with actual resident populations. In some cases, the number of registered voters is very close to, or even exceeds, the total resident population, which is a strong indication of outdated or insufficiently maintained electoral registers.

This phenomenon often results from automatic voter registration systems based on permanent residence records, combined with insufficient mechanisms for updating the status of citizens who have emigrated, changed residence, lost voting eligibility or died. As a consequence, official turnout figures may be artificially deflated and distort the real level of democratic participation among resident citizens. The gap between registered voters and those who actually reside in the country or vote from abroad may also create structural vulnerabilities, including risks of misuse of votes on behalf of absent or deceased persons.

Issues related to the accuracy of electoral registers have been identified in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) reports and recommendations in several member States, including Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Albania and the Republic of Moldova. However, this matter has not yet been addressed as a systemic European challenge.

In the digital age, there is no technical justification for maintaining inaccurate or outdated electoral rolls. The Parliamentary Assembly should therefore prepare a report on this issue, with a view to identifying good practices and establishing common standards for the maintenance, digital modernisation and regular auditing of electoral registers, while fully respecting voting rights, personal data protection and the rights of citizens residing abroad.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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