

Resolution 2222 (2018)¹

Promoting diversity and equality in politics

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Diversity is an inherent part of European societies and contributes to their richness. However, all too often, elected institutions fail to mirror this diversity, reinforcing the stereotype that politics is the reserve of a certain category of people, to the exclusion of others. Women, visible minorities, people with an immigration background, national minorities, young people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and persons with disabilities remain under-represented in politics at local, regional, national and European level. This representation gap perpetuates the idea that politics is reserved for a select group, composed mostly of white, heterosexual men over 50.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly is convinced that promoting greater representativeness of elected institutions would strengthen their democratic character, enhance the quality and legitimacy of their decision making and increase people's trust in the political system. It would also contribute to preventing and combating discrimination, sending out a powerful message in favour of equality and inclusion.

3. A wide range of measures are necessary to promote greater representativeness of the political system, some of which require legislative changes or imply the introduction of specific policies. Some could be better achieved through effective compliance with Council of Europe instruments, while others are within the remit of political parties which, to a large extent, act as gatekeepers to political institutions.

4. The Assembly has already adopted a wealth of resolutions laying down recommendations to improve the representativeness of elected bodies, focusing on aspects such as the balanced representation of women and men, the political participation and representation of national minorities, the political participation of young people, the political rights of persons with disabilities and the political participation of non-citizens.

5. This sectoral approach is important to identify specific measures targeting the situation of specific groups. However, the Assembly believes that the time has come to take a more holistic approach and look at the issue of diversity, equality and inclusion across the board, in order to ensure that parliaments and other elected institutions fully reflect the complex diversity of European societies.

6. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the member States to lay down the conditions to improve the participation and representation of people from a diverse background in the political system and, to this end, to:

6.1. implement Assembly [Resolution 2111 \(2016\)](#) on assessing the impact of measures to improve women's political representation;

6.2. implement Assembly [Resolution 2155 \(2017\)](#) "The political rights of persons with disabilities: a democratic issue";

6.3. engage in a reflection on limiting the number of elected mandates held by one person and consider introducing an eligibility age corresponding to the age of the majority, with a view to encouraging young people to participate;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 1 June 2018 (see [Doc. 14556](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Killion Munyama).*



- 6.4. sign and ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157) and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144), if they have not yet done so, and effectively implement them, as well as the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life;
 - 6.5. provide civic education to all students, irrespective of the curriculum;
 - 6.6. disseminate information on participation in political life, including in the most common foreign languages;
 - 6.7. support the creation and functioning of civil society-led youth parliaments;
 - 6.8. launch awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of diversity in politics and on deconstructing stereotypes with regard to the active participation of people from diverse backgrounds in politics.
7. The Assembly calls on national parliaments to ensure greater openness, transparency and inclusiveness in their work, while introducing internal measures to effectively tackle hate speech, and in particular to:
- 7.1. set up broad public consultations to take fully informed policy decisions;
 - 7.2. enhance co-operation and exchange of information with national equality bodies;
 - 7.3. introduce, where they do not exist, codes of conduct for members of parliament comprising effective disciplinary sanctions against hate speech, violence and incitement to violence;
 - 7.4. organise training for new members of parliament to provide guidance in their new responsibilities;
 - 7.5. set up internship programmes and ensure that their beneficiaries come from a variety of backgrounds;
 - 7.6. invite youth parliaments for regular exchanges on activities and co-operation.
8. Finally, the Assembly invites political parties to promote diversity and equality in their internal functioning and, to this end, to:
- 8.1. encourage the progression of people from diverse backgrounds within party structures;
 - 8.2. introduce mentorship programmes and ensure that the beneficiaries come from a variety of backgrounds;
 - 8.3. support the creation of group-specific fora within their ranks;
 - 8.4. ensure that equality across the board is mainstreamed in their political programmes and the public discourse of their leaders;
 - 8.5. ensure diversity across the board in the composition of their electoral lists;
 - 8.6. ensure that during electoral campaigns, candidates from diverse backgrounds are given equivalent opportunities and means for visibility and campaigning;
 - 8.7. refrain from using diversity as a tool of political instrumentalisation;
 - 8.8. set up internal mechanisms, where they do not yet exist, to prevent and sanction hate speech, incitement and recourse to violence by their members.