Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 2301 (2026)[1]

Elections in times of crisis

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution 2636 (2026) "Elections in times of crisis", underlines that recent crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, armed conflicts and hybrid threats have risked seriously disrupting electoral processes and have challenged institutional safeguards.

2. Such crises endanger the practical organisation of elections and risk severely affecting the fundamental rights and freedoms essential to democratic participation.

3. The Assembly expresses its serious concern that elections are rarely held in conditions of normalcy. Polarisation, widespread disinformation, foreign interference, cyberattacks, climate-related disruptions and the spillover of conflicts have created a persistent context of risk and vulnerability for electoral processes.

4. The Assembly emphasises that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democratic societies. Independent, transparent and resilient electoral processes are essential for both citizens' trust in public institutions and the competitiveness of the electoral environment.

5. In this regard, the Assembly recalls the extensive *acquis* of the Council of Europe in the electoral field, including the work of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Assembly's own election observation activities.

6. Building on the 2023 Bern Parliamentary Conference entitled "Elections in times of crisis: challenges and opportunities" and echoing the Council of Europe's work towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe, the Assembly underlines that safeguarding electoral integrity must be at the heart of efforts to protect and revitalise democracy in Europe.

7. In view of the central role played by the Council of Europe in ensuring electoral integrity, the Assembly asks the Committee of Ministers to:

7.1. strengthen the coherence and visibility of the Council of Europe's work on electoral resilience, including by developing a set of standards for the preparation of elections in crisis situations and by reinforcing the Council of Europe Electoral Cycle as a comprehensive tool covering all phases of the electoral process;

7.2. enhance support for member States in reviewing their legal and institutional frameworks to provide clear, proportionate and transparent mechanisms for holding or postponing elections in emergencies, in line with European and international standards;

7.3. promote reinforced co-operation between relevant stakeholders to strengthen whole-of-society resilience to disinformation, cyberattacks and foreign interference, especially during election periods;

7.4. promote regular exchanges between central election commissions of member States and international partners on threats to electoral processes and measures to strengthen their integrity and resilience, building on and reinforcing forums such as the European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 27 January 2026 (4th sitting) (see Doc. 16297, report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Damien Cottier). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 January 2026 (4th sitting).

7.5. continue to provide support, including through technical assistance and co-operation programmes to member States affected by conflict or prolonged emergencies, with particular attention to Ukraine, to enable secure, inclusive and credible elections to be conducted in line with European and international standards as soon as conditions permit.