

Friday 26 November 2020

P9_TA(2020)0327

Stocktaking of European elections

European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2020 on stocktaking of European elections (2020/2088(INI))

(2021/C 425/11)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and in particular Articles 10, 14 and 17(7) thereof,
- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Articles 20 and 22 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Articles 21, 39 and 52(1) thereof,
- having regard to the Declaration on Article 17(6) and (7) of the Treaty on European Union annexed to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference which adopted the Treaty of Lisbon,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in particular Article 21 thereof,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in particular Article 25 thereof,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and in particular Article 29 thereof,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, and in particular its principle 1,
- having regard to Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2018/994 of 13 July 2018 amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to European Council Decision (EU) 2018/937 of 28 June 2018 establishing the composition of the European Parliament ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2018/767 of 22 May 2018 fixing the period for the ninth election of representatives to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/673 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 May 2018 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2019/493 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 March 2019 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 as regards a verification procedure related to infringements of rules on the protection of personal data in the context of elections to the European Parliament ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission, as amended ⁽⁶⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 178, 16.7.2018, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 165 I, 2.7.2018, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 129, 25.5.2018, p. 76.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 114 I, 4.5.2018, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 85 I, 27.3.2019, p. 7.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 304, 20.11.2010, p. 47.

Friday 26 November 2020

- having regard to its resolution of 11 November 2015 on the reform of the electoral law of the European Union ⁽⁷⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty ⁽⁸⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union ⁽⁹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 April 2018 on the draft Council decision fixing the period for the ninth election of representatives to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage ⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 February 2018 on the composition of the European Parliament ⁽¹¹⁾,
 - having regard to its decision of 16 July 2019 on the election of the President of the Commission ⁽¹²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 October 2019 on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European democratic processes ⁽¹³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the Future of Europe ⁽¹⁴⁾,
 - having regard to its decision of 18 June 2020 on setting up a special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, and defining its responsibilities, numerical strength and term of office ⁽¹⁵⁾,
 - having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) information report of 20 March 2019 on the real rights of persons with disabilities to vote in European Parliament elections,
 - having regard to the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on gender equality, in particular its Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A9-0211/2020),
- A. whereas the 2019 European elections registered the highest turnout of any elections to the European Parliament in the last 20 years, with 50,66 %, (an increase of eight percentage points compared to 2014), sending a positive signal that European citizens are taking an increasing interest in developments at EU level and that they believe that EU legislation has an impact on their daily lives; whereas, however, that figure masks wide disparities between the Member States, the abstention rate remained high and more must therefore be done to increase participation in European elections;
- B. whereas the results of the Eurobarometer survey commissioned by Parliament after the 2019 European elections show that the state of the economy and the environment were the two main priorities for voters, which clearly indicates that citizens who took part in the European elections wish for more action at EU level in these two policy fields, for which competence is shared between the EU and national authorities ⁽¹⁶⁾;

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 366, 27.10.2017, p. 7.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 215.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 201.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 170.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ C 463, 21.12.2018, p. 83.

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0002.

⁽¹³⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0031.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0098.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0161.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Eurobarometer 91.5, 'The 2019 Post-Electoral Survey — Have European Elections Entered a New Dimension?', European Parliament, September 2019.

Friday 26 November 2020

- C. whereas the right choice of electoral system creates the right environment for citizens to believe in their basic democratic right to vote for their democratic representatives and, at the same time, for political representatives to listen to their voters and represent their interests, and as such creates self-efficacy among citizens;
- D. whereas according to the Eurobarometer survey, the higher turnout was in part due to the increased participation of young people, although people in the over-40 age group are still much more likely to vote; whereas more than 50 % of young people voted out of a sense of civic duty and in response to the climate emergency;
- E. whereas the relentless engagement of civil society played a crucial role in pro-European discourse ahead of the European elections;
- F. whereas the higher turnout was also linked to gains by pro-European parties receiving votes from younger generations, which added to the pro-European majority in the European Parliament, but the results of Eurosceptics, populists and nationalist movements, which threaten the EU integration project, should be taken as a warning;
- G. whereas the higher turnout is also a sign that EU citizens want the EU to act swiftly, democratically and effectively on important matters such as employment, the cost of living, social dumping, climate change, migration, the protection of fundamental rights and democratisation;
- H. whereas we need to be more efficient and proactive in taking advantage of all means of communication, including digital technology, to foster a strong link between political decisions taken at EU level and constituents' sense of connection to EU institutions;
- I. whereas while gender equality among Members of the European Parliament has improved (41 % women in 2019, up from 37 % in 2014), a gender-balanced Parliament has not yet been reached; whereas these figures mask significant differences between Member States and the many challenges still to be overcome if gender parity is to be achieved;
- J. whereas Ursula von der Leyen is the first female President of the European Commission; whereas 13 of her Commissioners are women, representing the largest share of female Commissioners in history;
- K. whereas Europe's diverse and multicultural society needs to be better represented in the European Parliament;
- L. whereas 15 Member States still restrict voting rights for people with disabilities, thus preventing the meaningful participation and representation of these citizens in democratic processes; whereas as a result of national rules, an estimated 800 000 EU citizens were not able to exercise their right to vote in the last European elections because of their disabilities or mental health problems;
- M. whereas demographic change and the ageing of our societies are factors which will increase the number of people resident in long-term care establishments and hospitals; whereas the wider use of the specific, formal arrangements made for such people in many Member States should be encouraged;
- N. whereas the deadline for registering on the electoral roll varies greatly from one Member State to another, ranging from 90 days to 3 days prior to elections; whereas the EESC information report on the real rights of persons with disabilities to vote in European elections recommends that electoral rolls be closed at the earliest two weeks before elections are held;
- O. whereas according to a joint report drawn up by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) and the Fondation Abbé-Pierre⁽¹⁷⁾, there are at least 700 000 homeless people in the EU and almost 9 million households live in severely inadequate housing; whereas that figure has increased by 70 % in the space of 10 years; whereas it is very difficult for homeless people to vote;

⁽¹⁷⁾ FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé-Pierre, 'Fifth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2020', July 2020.

Friday 26 November 2020

- P. whereas the reform of the Electoral Act of 1976, as adopted by the European Parliament in its legislative resolution of 4 July 2018 on the draft Council decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976 ⁽¹⁸⁾, is still not fully ratified by three Member States;
- Q. whereas Parliament should pursue its proposals for amendments to the Electoral Act, still pending ratification by some Member States, with renewed vigour and push for unified European electoral rules;
- R. whereas the outcome of the 2019 European elections has led to the emergence of a new parliamentary majority composed of different political groups with a clear pro-European identity;
- S. whereas the 2019 elections failed to culminate in the choice of a Commission President from among the various Spitzenkandidaten as a result of the Council's opposition, which resulted in reduced trust in the process; whereas the election of the Commission President depends on securing the support of the majority of Members of the European Parliament; whereas only some of the EU citizens who took part in the European elections believed that their vote could make a difference when it came to the election of the President of the Commission, highlighting the need to raise awareness of the process among EU citizens;
- T. whereas the Spitzenkandidaten process has yet to be fully developed; whereas it lacks, among other things, the possibility for Spitzenkandidaten to stand as official candidates, which would enable all European voters to vote for their preferred Spitzenkandidat and to be aware of who the candidates to the presidency of the Commission are and how they were chosen by European political parties; whereas Parliament raised this issue in its decision of 7 February 2018 on the revision of the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission ⁽¹⁹⁾;
- U. whereas the Spitzenkandidaten system needs to be reformed as a matter of urgency through in-depth reflection at the Conference on the Future of Europe, by taking into account the proportional nature of the European electoral system, and must be ready to be applied at the next European elections in 2024; whereas this reflection should also include the de facto political role of the Commission and its President and any related changes to the decision-making process of the Union;
- V. whereas the fact that only 8 % of survey respondents said that they voted in the last elections in order to influence the choice of the next Commission President ⁽²⁰⁾ underlines that the process of the selection of the President of the Commission needs to be clarified as a matter of urgency and to be made more transparent to voters;
- W. whereas institutional proposals such as transnational lists, as mentioned by Parliament in its resolution of 7 February 2018 on the composition of the European Parliament, placing European political parties and movements more at the centre of the European elections, the transformation of the Council into a second legislative chamber of the Union, as proposed in its resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union, or the introduction of the possibility for European political parties and movements to form pre-electoral coalitions could help to transform the European elections into a single European election, as opposed to the collection of 27 separate national elections that it is today;
- X. whereas the process of the examination of the declarations of interests and the hearings of the Commissioners-designate by the European Parliament was an important step in increasing the Commission's accountability to Parliament and the public in general; whereas this process can and should be further improved in the future;
- Y. whereas democratic processes at both Member State and EU levels have been targeted by foreign powers, sometimes in connection with internal actors, in order to influence the outcome of elections and weaken the Union; whereas the mechanisms put in place by the EU institutions, such as the Code of Practice against Disinformation and the Rapid Alert System for elections, contributed to the mitigation of foreign interference during the election campaign;

⁽¹⁸⁾ OJ C 118, 8.4.2020, p. 246.

⁽¹⁹⁾ OJ C 463, 21.12.2018, p. 89.

⁽²⁰⁾ Eurobarometer 91.5, September 2019.

Friday 26 November 2020

- Z. whereas the Commission's requests to social media platforms ahead of the elections created confusion and had unintended consequences such as the ban on Europe-wide political advertisements, which is one of the main instruments for European political parties to be identified and recognised by voters during European election campaigns; whereas especially on that matter, the institutions should develop an interinstitutional approach in order to have a positive impact on the security and stability of the electoral process; whereas the Code of Practice is purely voluntary and focuses on transparency rather than actual limits such as on targeted political advertisements;
- AA. whereas European political parties and foundations are the facilitators of successful European political debate, both during and beyond European elections, and should be rendered more visible; whereas, by virtue of this important role, European political parties and political foundations should ensure maximum financial transparency on the funds they manage, particularly on funds from the EU budget;
- AB. whereas European political parties face various restrictions to campaigning during European elections, including the limited possibility for campaign financing and shared activities with their national member parties, and are prohibited from campaigning in national referendums on European matters;
- AC. whereas the emergence of new political parties and movements ahead of the European elections has shown citizens' interest in political innovation;
- AD. whereas diverging national rules for establishing parties and accessing the European elections remain a significant obstacle to political innovation and to creating true pan-European political debate;
- AE. whereas it has been reported that due to the organisation of voter registration in the UK, around a million European citizens were deprived of the possibility to exercise their right to vote in the European elections;
1. Welcomes the higher turnout in the 2019 European elections, which demonstrates that the trend of decreasing voter turnout in Europe can be reversed, but at the same time expresses disappointment at the continuing high abstention rate and that across the EU almost half of all eligible voters did not cast a vote; recognises the important role of campaigns led by the EU institutions and civil society organisations to increase turnout, in particular Parliament's 'This Time I'm Voting' campaign; stresses that more actions need to be undertaken at local, regional, national and European level to incentivise voters to participate in European elections; considers that this higher turnout shows that an increasing proportion of citizens consider the EU to be the appropriate level at which to address the challenges of our time such as the economy and sustainable growth, climate change and environmental protection, social and gender inequalities, the digital revolution, the promotion of freedom, human rights and democracy, and demography, and geopolitical concerns such as migration and foreign policy, security and the role of the EU in the world; calls for all the EU institutions, therefore, to take responsibility and act upon the mandate they have been given, directly or indirectly, by the citizens;
 2. Is confident that the trend of growing voter turnout can be repeated if the connection and accountability between voters and candidates are strengthened and EU-wide challenges and political programmes are debated across Member States;
 3. Welcomes the substantial increase of youth participation in the elections; reiterates its call on the Council and the Commission to take into account their concerns, which are critical for the lives of the next generations, by means of public consultation procedures and the Conference on the Future of Europe; recommends that Member States reflect upon the harmonisation of the minimum age of voters in order to further enhance the participation of young voters;
 4. Welcomes the fact that the gender balance in Parliament has improved following the last elections; stresses, however, that there is still room for further improvement in order to achieve a genuinely gender-balanced Parliament and recognises that there are substantial differences between Member States, from electing more than 50 % women to not electing a single female Member of the European Parliament; calls on Member States and the institutions of the Union to take all necessary measures to promote the principle of equality between men and women throughout the whole electoral process; emphasises, in this connection, the importance of gender-balanced electoral lists; calls on the Commission, in cooperation with Parliament and other bodies such as the Venice Commission, to formulate recommendations to Member States with

Friday 26 November 2020

a view to increasing the representation of women in the European Parliament, and calls for the introduction of lists of candidates with an equal number of male and female candidates on electable places, for example through the use of zipped lists or other equivalent methods, as in many Member States there is no legislation ensuring political parity for election;

5. Notes that only a few Members of the European Parliament belong to ethnic, linguistic and other minorities⁽²¹⁾; believes that the fight against racism and the elimination of exclusion and discrimination is a duty that derives from EU values and from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; stresses that more needs to be done at national and European level in order to further increase the inclusion in electoral lists and the election of minorities and calls on Member States and political parties participating in European elections to adopt proactive measures to increase the representation of underrepresented groups;

6. Recalls, in this light, the particular difficulties faced by Roma people in the area of political participation, especially as regards accessing voter registration procedures owing inter alia to a lack of identity documentation; calls on the Member States to strengthen Roma voter education and turnout;

7. Notes that similar recommendations could be made concerning the exercise of passive and active voting rights of citizens with disabilities; recalls with great concern that throughout the Union an estimated 800 000 citizens with disabilities were not able to vote in 2019 on account of national rules; calls on the Member States to step up exchanges of best practice in order to improve access to polling stations for persons with disabilities; points out that for voters with disabilities the practical voting arrangements are just as important as access to information or to polling stations;

8. Urges Member States to guarantee that all those who have the right to vote, including EU citizens living outside their country of origin, homeless people and prisoners who are granted such a right in accordance with national laws, are able to exercise this right;

9. Notes that diverging electoral cultures have resulted in a range of different electoral systems; recommends that clear regulations, recommendations and guidelines ensure approximation towards a unified European electoral law and equality of the vote for EU citizens, notably when it comes to the right to register a party and to stand for elections, access to ballots, the fielding of candidates, accessibility, proxy or remote voting, and days of election;

10. Acknowledges the good organisation of the electoral process in the 2019 European elections despite the uncertainty resulting from the departure of the UK from the EU; highlights, in this context, the smooth recomposition of the European Parliament after Brexit due to the safeguard clause set out in its resolution of 7 February 2018 on the composition of the European Parliament;

11. Urges the Member States, ahead of the 2024 elections, to make more resources available in consulates so that checks can be stepped up and members of the public made aware that multiple voting is illegal;

12. Calls on the Member States to improve their laws in order to make it easier for homeless people to vote; emphasises that insisting that people provide proof of address in order to vote, as laid down in Council Directive 93/109/EC of 6 December 1993 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals⁽²²⁾, can serve to exclude homeless people in countries where they cannot obtain an administrative address; strongly recommends that the requirement to provide proof of address be done away with in order to make it easier for homeless people who are full EU citizens to vote;

13. Is of the opinion that the reasons why the Spitzenkandidaten process failed to produce a President of the European Commission after the 2019 elections are, first, because no improvements to the application of the Spitzenkandidat principle were adopted following the experience of 2014 and, second, because of the lack of explanation and understanding of the process among EU citizens; intends to reform the democratic process for choosing the Commission President before the next European elections of 2024; notes, however, that the election of the Commission President always depends on securing the support of the majority of Members of the European Parliament so that the electoral results are fully taken into account, as envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty;

⁽²¹⁾ Commission communication of 19 June 2020 entitled 'Report on the 2019 elections to the European Parliament' (COM(2020)0252).

⁽²²⁾ OJ L 329, 30.12.1993, p. 34.

Friday 26 November 2020

14. Underlines the important role of the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe in the debate on institutional matters, also in the light of the outcome of the 2019 European elections; welcomes the upcoming joint declaration of the three EU institutions on the Conference on the Future of Europe and calls for its swift adoption; recalls the commitment by the Commission President to address topics specifically related to democratic processes and institutional matters, including in the context of the Conference, without prejudice to the decisions taken by the Conference itself on the list of priorities to be addressed;

15. Stresses that the election of the Commission and its President depends on a majority of Parliament's members, which de facto requires the formation of a coalition by programmatic agreement, as shown in the election of the von der Leyen Commission;

16. Points out that nothing prevents European parties and movements from forming coalitions ahead of the European elections, and so putting forward a joint programme and a single-coalition Spitzenkandidat;

17. Considers that the outcome of the European elections has reinforced the political dimension of the election of the European Commission, and therefore the need for more accurate and objective scrutiny of the declarations of interests of the Commissioners-designate; believes, in addition, that this process has highlighted the need for a technical and impartial evaluation of the declarations of interests of the Commissioners-designate; supports the coming reflection in the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) and the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) on the creation of an independent ethics body, which could be endowed with the appropriate resources; underlines, however, that the approval or rejection of each Commissioner-designate and of the College of Commissioners is ultimately a political exercise which is firmly in the hands of the European Parliament;

18. Insists that all European voters should be allowed to vote for their preferred candidate for the President of the Commission; reiterates, therefore, that the Spitzenkandidaten should be able to stand as official candidates at the next elections in all Member States, elected by a European political party and standing for a unified European electoral programme; stresses that, taking into account the proportional electoral system of the EU, the election of the President of the European Commission should depend on his or her ability to gain support from a majority of Members of the European Parliament;

19. Points out that the proposed changes to the EU's primary law within this report, which reflect the increased political role of the Commission within the EU framework, should also include the individual and collective responsibility of the Commission towards Parliament and the Council, as well as the transformation of the Council into a second legislative chamber of the Union;

20. Proposes a reform of the Electoral Law and the decision on the composition of the European Parliament, envisaging both immediate improvements for the upcoming elections and an agreed and obligatory roadmap of improvements beyond the upcoming elections;

21. Acknowledges that despite the fact that the agreed reform of the Electoral Law has not yet been ratified by some Member States, the following elements which could improve the European electoral process could be discussed, including in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe:

- new remote voting methods for citizens during European elections in specific or exceptional circumstances,
- common election admission rules for candidates and common campaign and funding rules,
- harmonised standards for passive and active voting rights across Member States, including a reflection on decreasing the minimum age of voters in all Member States to 16,
- provisions on periods of absence for Members, for example in the case of maternity leave, parental leave or severe illness;

22. Reiterates its call for the establishment of a European Electoral Authority with a mandate to monitor the implementation of the guidelines and provisions related to European electoral law; recommends strengthening the exchange mechanisms between national electoral offices under the coordination of the European Electoral Authority;

Friday 26 November 2020

23. Expresses deep concern about the fact that evidence of interference and disinformation campaigns continuously came to light, often with indications of foreign influence, in the run-up to the 2019 European elections; commends the efforts by the Commission and other institutions to tackle foreign interference during the electoral campaign, notably through the East StratCom Task Force of the EEAS; points out, nevertheless, that the financial and human resources needed to counter these attacks on European democracy, including at national level, are many times superior to the combined designated European resources; urges the Commission and the Member States to raise financing for the fight against foreign interference significantly; stresses that priority must be given to improving the education children receive from a young age in media use and civics, in society as a whole and in schools, in order to develop people's ability to think critically and identify unsubstantiated information and links to verifiable information;

24. Considers that illegitimate interference in electoral processes is not an exclusively foreign phenomenon; believes that the content-promoting algorithms of social media platforms must be scrutinised and, if necessary, regulated in order to ensure that the information available to citizens is not biased and that their right to information is protected during and beyond electoral campaigns;

25. Believes that the difficulties encountered with political advertisements on social media platforms demonstrate the need to harmonise campaign rules throughout the Union, especially when the European elections de facto lead to pan-European campaigns in which the need to comply with 27 different legal regimes in a digital space creates hurdles and legal uncertainty for political parties and movements;

26. Urges the Commission and the Council to take all necessary measures to combat foreign interference and the internal and external dimensions of disinformation effectively, to fully engage with Parliament's new Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation (INGE), and to fully take into account its recommendations as soon as its conclusions are delivered and before the next European elections; encourages the Commission and the Council to work much more closely with Parliament on these matters, as the protection of our democratic institutions is a core competence of the European Parliament;

27. Recognises the important role of European political parties, political movements and foundations in fostering a European political debate; points out, however, that owing to restrictive measures at European and national levels, European political parties cannot fully participate in European election campaigns; stresses, moreover, that they are not allowed to campaign in referendums that concern European matters, such as international trade agreements or the UK's 2016 referendum on EU membership; calls for a further alignment of national and EU legislation in order to level the playing field across the EU for the European elections; proposes that the visibility of European political parties and movements be enhanced by placing their names and logos on the ballot papers, and recommends that the same should also appear on all materials used in European election campaigns;

28. Considers that European political parties' manifestos should be known before the elections, which requires clear and transparent rules on campaigning; underlines that European election rules must promote European party democracy, including by making it obligatory for national parties running in European elections to display the logo of their respective European party next to the national logo on the ballot sheet;

29. Proposes to amend Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations⁽²³⁾ to allow European political parties and foundations to fully participate in the European political space, to campaign, to be able to use campaign funds and stand in European elections, to increase the transparency of their funding, especially as regards the management of funds from the EU budget and when funding comes from member parties, and to prohibit donations from private and public bodies from non-EU countries; stresses, nonetheless, that membership fees from parties from Council of Europe countries could be allowed with a view to fostering pan-European political bonds, provided that this takes place within a framework of enhanced transparency;

⁽²³⁾ OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 1.

Friday 26 November 2020

30. Points out that European parties' manifestos were still not a relevant part of the political debate ahead of the 2019 elections; strongly regrets instances when such debate was focused on national topics instead of EU matters, without any direct link to EU policy-making; considers that the European dimension of elections can be enhanced most significantly through more information provided to citizens on the decisions taken by the EU and the impact of such decisions on their daily lives;
31. Is of the opinion that the introduction of an annual European Week taking place simultaneously in all national parliaments, with debates on the Commission Work Programme between Members of national Parliaments, European Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament and representatives of civil society, would support the emergence of connected interparliamentary public spheres and improve the communication of European actions at national level;
32. Calls for a coordinated strategy at European level to ensure media coverage of the European elections, notably by ensuring that the political agendas of the different European political forces are debated, that candidates standing for the European elections in different Member States are invited and that campaign events are covered;
33. Encourages public broadcasters to host and broadcast debates between leading candidates, as well as between candidates running for the European Parliament, as part of their mandate to inform the public;
34. Considers that the outcome of the European elections is a clear signal for an in-depth institutional reflection that will allow citizens, civil society and their representatives to shape the future of the Union; underlines that the COVID-19 outbreak has increased the urgency of an institutional reform process at European level; calls, therefore, on all institutional partners to assume their responsibility and deliver an ambitious, interactive and inclusive Conference on the Future of Europe open to citizens, civil society and their representatives and which strengthens representative democracy and the EU's resilience by delivering tangible results, and to follow up on the conclusions of the Conference, which should bring about significant changes to the policies and institutional architecture of the EU and reinvigorate the European project;
35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
-