

European Parliament Resolution on a draft electoral procedure incorporating common principles (15 July 1998)

Caption: European Parliament Resolution of 15 July 1998 on a draft electoral procedure incorporating common principles for the election of Members to the European Parliament.

Source: Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC). 21.09.1998, n° C 292. [s.l.]. ISSN 0378-6986.

"Resolution on a draft electoral procedure incorporating common principles for the election of Members of the European Parliament (15 July 1998)", auteur:European Parliament , p. 66.

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Last updated: 15/05/2014

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A4-0212/98

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr De Vries on the uniform electoral procedure for the election of Members of the European Parliament (B4-0723/96),
 - having regard to its reports on a uniform electoral procedure, and in particular its resolutions of 10 October 1991 ⁽¹⁾ and 10 March 1993 ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage annexed to the Council Decision of 20 September 1976,
 - having regard to the proposal of 22 October 1996 on a uniform electoral procedure which was tabled by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany at the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and which reproduces the key aspects of Parliament's resolution of 10 March 1993,
 - having regard to Article 138 ⁽³⁾ of the EC Treaty and the modification thereof effected by the Treaty of Amsterdam,
 - having regard to Rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Institutional Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights (A4-0212/98),
- A. whereas the Treaty of Amsterdam introduces the concept of 'principles common to all Member States', following the guidelines set out by Parliament in its resolution of 10 March 1993 referred to above, which did not explicitly propose a uniform electoral system but merely general guidelines;
- B. whereas the Government of the United Kingdom has tabled a bill in Parliament, introducing regional proportional representation for the European elections in 1999,
- C. whereas the negotiations on enlargement will probably lead to ten new Member States joining the European Union,
- D. whereas a very broad consensus has emerged among the Member States on determining a number of common principles,
- E. whereas those principles are intended to be implemented in the first instance at national level in a union of peoples and states; whereas the number of Members elected in each Member State is intended to guarantee appropriate representation of the peoples of the states brought together in the Community,
1. Welcomes the agreement reached by negotiators at the IGC establishing a number of common principles; is convinced that some of the provisions can enter into force for the next European elections, particularly a system of proportional representation, the minimum threshold, incompatibilities and measures aimed at reaching the objective of equality between men and women, whereas others should be phased in;
 2. Considers that there is a general consensus on introducing voting based on a system of proportional representation, and that this should be incorporated into the European electoral system;

3. Notes that it is impossible to establish a system of territorial constituencies in a uniform manner and that there has to be a distinction based on the population of each Member State; emphasizes, however, that a system of territorial constituencies must not affect the principle of proportional representation, in accordance with Article 2 of the draft Act;
4. Considers that, with a view to a European political awareness and the development of European political parties, a certain percentage of seats could be distributed on a proportional representation basis within a single constituency formed by the territory of the Member States;
5. Observes, where the use of a threshold is concerned, that this should remain optional and in any event should not exceed 5% of the votes cast nationally;
6. Notes the stimulus to participation represented by preferential voting, which should, however, remain optional for each Member State;
7. Considers that when lists of candidates for European elections are drawn up account must be taken of the objective of equality between men and women and that it is primarily a matter for the political parties to achieve this objective directly;
8. Proposes that European elections should be held on a date in the month of May, so as to maximize the turnout by avoiding the school summer holidays, which start at the beginning of June in several Member States;
9. Recommends that the number of days on which elections can be held should be reduced to the absolute minimum, with a view to reaching a consensus on a single voting day, or, if this is not possible, no more than two days (e.g. Saturday and Sunday);
10. Calls on the Council to examine the following draft Act and to adopt it speedily so as to enable it to enter into force as soon as possible;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the draft Act annexed to it to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments and governments of the Member States.

(1) OJ C 280, 28.10.1991, p. 141.

(2) OJ C 115, 26.4.1993, p. 121.