

RESOLUTION

on the new European Electoral Law - Towards a union-wide constituency to strengthen the European public sphere

Adopted by the Federal Committee of UEF, Online 11 December 2022

The Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists,

Having regard to:

- The Treaties and in particular to Articles 2, 3, 9, 10, 14 and 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and to Articles 8, 20, 22, 223(1) and 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and to Article 2 of Protocol No 1 on the role of national parliaments in the European Union,
- The European Parliament resolutions of 15 July 1998 on a draft electoral procedure incorporating common principles for the election of Members of the European Parliament, its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, its resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014, and its resolution of 11 November 2015 on the Reform of the electoral law of the EU;
- The UEF Resolution on the European political parties (adopted on 24 November 2004), that calls for a more prominent role of European political parties in the democratic debate, the presence of the banner of European parties and the candidate of each political family to preside the Commission;
- The UEF Resolution on the completion of European political unity adopted on 18 June 2017, asking for the reinforcement of the Spitzenkandidaten process by the creation of transnational lists;
- The UEF FC Resolution on a Europe-wide constituency for the 2019 European Parliament elections adopted on 22 October 2017;
- the Resolution of the European Parliament adopted on 3 May 2022 “on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage”;
- the Report on the Final Outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe, adopted on 9 May 2022, which demands the reform of the “EU electoral law to harmonise electoral conditions” for the elections to the European Parliament”, as well as moving towards voting for Union-wide list”;

Considering:

- that the European elections are a unique momentum to further develop the feeling of a common belonging and to gather every European actor to achieve a common goal;
- the need of deepening common standards and procedures to develop a real European political campaign ahead of the 2024 European elections and not 27 paralleled national elections;
- the necessity to further develop a European democratic space, particularly to have a public debate on European policies during the European elections, where political parties would play a key role;
- that the Spitzenkandidat process, experienced in 2014 European elections, paves the way to upgrade the quality of European democracy, since it can put in the hands of citizens not only the choice of the MEPs but also of the President of the European Commission and his legislature programme;
- that having not implemented the Spitzenkandidat process by the in the procedure after the 2019 European elections have diminished the quality of European democracy;
- that the evolution toward transnational parties requires to help the European parties to play their role according to the treaties, i.e. to contribute “to the formation of a European political consciousness and the expression to the will of Union’s citizens”, giving them a more prominent role for the European elections;
- that gender equality is a fundamental principle and value of the European Union;
- that there is a need to still increase the European Parliament’s role within the EU institutional order, to assert its democratic authority, and provide European citizens with greater democratic control over the decision-making process;
- the need to foster the Europeanization of national parties by encouraging them to carry on public debate over European topics, and foster synergies between national and European parties of the same political family;
- that Member States are to encourage these affiliations during the electoral campaign, the communication having to refer to the common programme of the European parties;
- that European parties shall nominate their candidates to the presidency of the European Commission;
- that citizens should be allowed to express their preference for a global programme, embodied by a candidate to the presidency of the European Commission;
- that on the basis of a contradictory interpretation of Art. 17(7) TEU this breakthrough is now more bitterly than before challenged by the European Council members in order to keep the balance of powers in favour of the member States and their governments instead of the European Parliament;
- that in accordance to the Treaty on the European Union, MEPs represent the overall citizens of the Union and not just the citizens of the Member State in which they are elected;
- that Union-wide lists would lead to the institutionalization of the Spitzenkandidaten principle and give the right to citizens to cast a ballot for a candidate living in another EU country;
- that the move initiated in 2014 would therefore be even more consistent if those lead candidates were actually candidates in the European Parliament’s election as list leaders of all the lists presented in Member States by political parties affiliated to the same European political party, before being possibly candidates to the Commission’s presidency;

Taking into account that:

- a majority of MEPs is required to elect the head of the European Commission;
- for a single European political party to win the largest number of votes in European elections it could not be enough to achieve a majority in the European Parliament;
- a coalition of political parties could be necessary to elect the President of the European Commission;

Welcomes:

- the adoption by the European Parliament on 3 May of 2022, upon the proposal of the Vice President of UEF, of the new proposal of the European electoral law that supports the creation of a Union-wide constituency of 28 seats as a way to strengthen the European public sphere;
- the recognition of a Union-wide constituency as mean of reinforcing the visibility of the European political parties and their logos and to clarify the indication for the candidate of each political family to preside the Commission;
- that this new EP position guarantees geographical balance in the composition of the Union-wide lists, gender equality and gender parity and strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities in their access to the political rights;
- the proposal of fixing 9th of May as common European voting day as a way to create a more coherent pan-European election with the possibility of that day becoming a public holiday;
- the proposal of the European electoral Authority as the entity responsible of exercising all the functions related to the electoral process in the Union-wide constituency;
- the proposal of making postal voting availability mandatory, believing that is needed for voters who reside in another country or who are unable to go to the polling stations on election day, and that this could make the conduct of European elections more appealing for voters in specific or exceptional circumstances;
- the ongoing negotiations to reform the Regulation No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties, to make European political parties more visible and transparent;

Calls on:

- The Council to not delay the debate on the EP proposal and to find an agreement before the end of 2022 to implement the Union-wide Constituency for the 2024 EP Elections;
- UEF National sections to support the newly proposed electoral law and to campaign in the Member States in favour of this proposal, particularly liaising with the governments of Denmark, Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Netherlands and Finland;
- To the UEF EB to strengthen its political strategy and actions to campaign in support of this new EP proposal and to reach Council in order to find an agreement to implement this proposal for the EP 2024 Elections;