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## **“More participatory democracy to tackle climate change” Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021)**

(Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 September 2022  
at the 1441<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

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1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021) on “More participatory democracy to tackle climate change”. The recommendation has been brought to the attention of the governments of the member States and forwarded to the relevant committees for information and comments.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Committee of Ministers supports the development of participatory democracy in all member States and agrees with the Assembly that it can help to respond more effectively to the current climate crisis.
3. At their 1438<sup>th</sup> meeting (30 June 2022), with a view to fostering participatory democracy in Europe, the Ministers' Deputies instructed their European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) to prepare a draft recommendation on deliberative democracy. This text, based in particular on the CDDG's recent report on new forms of deliberative democracy, could be adopted by the Committee of Ministers by the end of the year or at the beginning of next year. In this connection, the Committee also refers to Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life and the Guidelines for civil participation in political decision making (2017). Participatory democracy was also the focus of the informal exchanges of views held between Committee of Ministers' rapporteur groups and civil society representatives on 3 June and 1 July 2022.<sup>2</sup>
4. As regards promoting effective means of enhancing citizens' competences in terms of democratic culture, in particular among young people, the Committee points out that the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) is central to the Council of Europe's Education Programme. The RFCDC identifies 20 competences that should be taught throughout education systems and which are necessary to equip young citizens with the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding they need in order to participate actively in today's complex, diverse democratic societies. It includes “knowledge and critical understanding of economies, environment and sustainability” within its scope. An Education Policy Advisers Network (EPAN) has been set up to facilitate the direct involvement of the member States in implementing the RFCDC and has been active since 2018. Implementation of the project is also carried out through the Democratic Schools Network and numerous co-operation and capacity-building projects, as well as a Working Group on Training set up recently.
5. The Committee would also point out that the topic of education for sustainable development is addressed in the Council of Europe's contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The Council of Europe is a member of the SDG-4 Education Steering Committee and, with its member States, has consistently advocated that education for democratic participation is the cornerstone of sustainable societies.

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<sup>1</sup> European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) and Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU).

<sup>2</sup> Exchange of views with civil society representatives and experts, held under the aegis of the Chair of the GR-DEM in co-operation with the President of the Conference of INGOs on 13 June 2022, on “Participatory Democracy: Opportunities and Challenges, Trends and Lessons learned”; informal exchange of views with civil society representatives, held on the initiative of the Chair of the GR-J on 1 July 2022 on “The participation of organisations representing youth, in particular the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), in the development of soft law in the Council of Europe”.

6. The Committee of Ministers believes in the importance of empowering young people as agents of change in relationship to environmental issues and supports further work in this area. Youth participation is one of the three main missions of the Council of Europe youth sector, as outlined in its Strategy 2030.<sup>3</sup> The Committee would point out that it set up the Council of Europe youth sector's unique system of co-management, which received the 2019 future policy bronze award from the World Future Council as one of the world's best policies for empowering young people. It also welcomes the launch by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) of a campaign focusing on revitalising democracy, meaningful youth participation and digitisation.<sup>4</sup> The campaign, which was launched in March 2022, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the youth sector, mobilises young people and youth partners in the member States and seeks to give them a real and meaningful voice in discussing how to revitalise democracy. Moreover, the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest have been invited to report annually on their measures to incorporate sustainability in their operation and activities. Lastly, again in March 2022, the CMJ started preparing a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on protecting youth civil society and supporting their participation in democratic processes. It also started preparing CMJ guidelines on young people's role in addressing the climate crisis.

7. The Committee of Ministers points out that one of the topics of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Forum for Democracy, "Can democracy save the environment?", held from 8 to 10 November 2021, was "Deliberative democracy for climate". Recommendations on this subject were issued to national governments (institutionalise citizen assemblies, involve young people in decision-making processes on environmental policies, establish safe platforms for young people discussing environmental issues and organise mentorship programmes), local and regional authorities (expand deliberative democracy and establish rules or practices to address and implement recommendations as binding on local authorities, develop participatory mechanisms that maintain the levels of trust necessary to convince people that they are actors in meaningful change) and civil society (advocate for more deliberative democracy on environmental issues and foster democratic vitality through civic engagement and education).

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<sup>3</sup> Resolution CM/Res(2020)2 on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030.

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/democracy-here-now/home>