



## Recommendation 2179 (2020)<sup>1</sup>

Provisional version

# Democracies facing the Covid-19 pandemic

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2337 \(2020\)](#) “Democracies facing the Covid-19 pandemic” whereby it calls, *inter alia*, on member and observer States to respect the system of democratic checks and balances and apply a number of principles when facing a public health emergency and when deciding whether to hold or postpone elections during such an emergency.
2. In the face of the pandemic, the Assembly considers that the international context must shift from rivalry among powers to an opportunity for strong and effective multilateral co-operation beyond partisan cleavages. It also calls on member and observer States to ensure that diagnostic tools, treatments and vaccines are available and affordable to everyone, starting with the most vulnerable groups among Europe’s 830 million citizens.
3. The Assembly welcomes the fact that, in the face of the challenges raised by the pandemic, the Council of Europe bodies and institutions – in particular, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) – have provided timely and adequate support to member States by sharing with their governments and parliaments tools, standards and guidelines aimed at ensuring compliance with the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in their response to the pandemic.
4. The Assembly welcomes in particular the Secretary General’s toolkit offering guidance to member States on “[Respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the Covid-19 sanitary crisis](#)”, as well as the Committee of Ministers’ [Declaration](#) on the Covid-19 pandemic, adopted on 22 April 2020 under the Georgian presidency. It also fully supports the theme of “Protection of human life and public health in the context of a pandemic – Effectively responding to a sanitary crisis in full respect for human rights and the principles of democracy and the rule of law”, which is the focus of the [priorities](#) of the Greek presidency of the Committee of Ministers, and looks forward to the Athens Declaration to be adopted on 4 November 2020 at ministerial level.
5. In light of the principles applicable to the situations of emergency elaborated by the Venice Commission and on the basis of information, available *inter alia* on the observatory of such situations in Venice Commission member States, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to build on national experiences and good practice in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic with a view to developing a checklist of parameters to enable the fullest democratic participation possible in situations of emergency.
6. Noting that co-operation, co-ordination and exchange of information and good practice between different tiers of government (national, regional and local) has proved crucial for the efficiency and effectiveness of the response by member States to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to prepare a recommendation with guidelines on multilevel governance and response to emergencies.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 13 October 2020 (see [Doc. 15157](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger; and [Doc. 15164](#), opinion of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), rapporteur: Ms Yuliya Lovochkina).

