RE PUBLIC

DRAFT CONSTITUTION · THE DELIBERATIVE REPUBLIC

Laws written by citizens chosen by lot

REpublic is a complete draft constitution to replace France's 1958 Constitution (the Fifth Republic). It has no president, no parliament and no elected representatives: conventions of 150 citizens chosen by lot, trained and paid for their time, pass the laws and the budget. Where France's Citizens' Convention for Climate could only make recommendations, these conventions decide; the civil service implements, under permanent oversight.

WHAT CHANGES

- Each law is entrusted to a convention of 150 citizens chosen by lot to mirror the country (sex, age, education, social class, place): training, adversarial hearings, counter-expertise, a vote, then dissolution.
- One convention sets the agenda for five years; another votes the budget each year. A petition of about 550,000 signatures requires the opening of a convention to be considered.
- A college of ministers, chaired in rotation, carries out the law without powers of its own. Ministers are chosen by a convention drawn by lot, from candidates vetted for competence and integrity, and can be removed.
- Regions, departments, inter-municipal bodies and municipalities are run the same way, by territorial conventions.

WHY

- The Fifth Republic concentrates power in the President and weakens Parliament (emergency powers under Article 16; Article 49.3 lets a bill pass without a vote).
- Elections poorly reflect social diversity, and participation is reduced to an occasional vote.
- The world has changed since 1958: digital technology has transformed how opinion is formed, representative democracies struggle to rise to the ecological and geopolitical challenges of the century, and forces hostile to the rule of law are winning power at the ballot box.

Hence a deliberative democracy: decisions based on informed and debated positions, faithful representation of the country's diversity, and a rule of law able to defend itself.

THE SAFEGUARDS

- A Constitutional Council of lawyers chosen by lot and, in case of manifest scientific error, a scientific council may suspend a law and send it back to a convention, never rewrite it.
- Inviolable fundamental rights cannot be rolled back, in a crisis or by amendment. In a crisis, an emergency convention drawn by lot in advance meets within 72 hours.
- Anyone may challenge a law. Every constitutional amendment goes to a referendum.
- Lobbying logged in a public register, foreign political funding banned, pressure on a member severely punished.

THE MAIN OBJECTION

"Ordinary citizens aren't competent, and lobbies will capture them."

Members of parliament are not specialists in every bill they vote on either, and they remain exposed to interest groups throughout their careers. France's Citizens' Convention for Climate showed what citizens can do: 150 people chosen by lot, trained, after hearing scientists, lawyers, economists and associations, adopted 149 reasoned proposals.

The Constitution organises this competence for every law (experts drawn by lot, an adversarial briefing file, public counter-expertise). A citizen who serves a few months, with no re-election to win, is a poorer long-term target than a career politician.

150	≈ €1.7bn	1 in 365
citizens chosen by lot for each law; the convention is then dissolved	a year (€1.2–2.5bn), against ≈ €3.7bn for the presidency, Parliament, elections and local councillors	chance of being chosen in any given year, mostly at local level

HOW TO GET THERE: TWO TEXTS, ONE REFERENDUM

1	2	3	4	5
Today: this draft, open to comments	A constitutional law or a referendum, under the 1958 rules, opens the process	Two conventions chosen by lot, side by side: 300 citizens write the Constitution, 150 the Declaration of Fundamental Rights	One referendum, two questions: one on the Constitution, one on the Declaration of Rights	New institutions in place within one month

Full text, item-by-item costing and answers to the main objections to sortition. Questions: republic-fr.org/en/contact

An independent citizens' project, published anonymously so that the debate is about the text, not its authors. The text and the history of every change are public. Version v26, November 2026. · github.com/republic-fr/Re-public

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