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### ELECTIONS AND IA IN PORTUGAL

Political truth is not technical-scientific truth: in the recent general elections in Brazil (which I had the opportunity to observe), the technical-scientific truth about the reliability of voting machines was not the political truth for almost half of the population.

More: the political debate dragged the Brazilian EMB, the Supreme Electoral Court, into its centre, which at times almost became confused with a candidacy.

This is an effective risk which is seriously aggravated when EMBs are called upon to confront objective truths with the political truths of each candidacy and which, in our view, should be avoided wherever possible.

One way to prevent this is to limit to the minimum possible the situations in which they are required to interfere directly with the electoral campaigns.

The understanding that has been consolidated in the Portuguese National Election Commission on fake news is, to a certain extent, transferrable to the field of AI: the measures to combat the possible misinformation have to be compatible with the freedom of action and propaganda of candidates in electoral processes and should not reduce them.

Regarding the integrity of the electoral process, the main issue seems to be, from this perspective, the unequal access to resources for the active actors (parties and candidates), since these resources involve large financial amounts.

Measures associated with the financial control of electoral campaigns and party resources can contribute to preventing misuse.

To these measures may be added, if a general consensus can be reached, obligations to disseminate information in order to ensure the greatest possible transparency.

On the other hand, the urgent need to set conditions of use, including absolute limitations and prohibitions, for the use of AI tools by entities outside the electoral contest, particularly for those that exercise some kind of power over citizens, is recognised.

Strong limitations on the use of these tools by public authorities during election periods, as long as they are related, even indirectly, to the election, can prevent abuse.

In any case, even without forgetting that one of the most important classic manipulations of elections, gerrymandering, falls in many countries within the scope of EMBs and is a privileged field for the use of AI, they legitimately act in the processes, are in many cases independent and, above all, are recognised as neutral in the dispute, their activity is scrutinised by candidates and citizens.

These last attributes legitimise the use of AI by EMBs.

In my country, the unprofessional nature of the electoral administration even claims for the use of IA instruments.

The only permanent professional bodies at central level (the government department that ensures the logistics of the election and the support services to the National Election Commission) are less than 50 people.

The immediate response to a few thousand questions asked, by phone or email, on the eve and day of the election, can be substantially improved with the use of AI tools.

The growing training needs of casual election officers can also be better addressed.

Other instrumental activities can benefit from these tools, such as helping to find information on web pages.

The use in other instrumental activities recognised as relevant to the process, however, always raises the same central questions: the availability of the organs and agents of political power and, above all, the confidence of citizens.

In conclusion and on the use of AI tools in elections let me highlight six key ideas that we are in process of consolidating:

- Regulate the activity of candidacies as minimum as possible;
- Establish mechanisms that eliminate flagrant inequalities in the access to resources by candidacies;
- Promote transparency;
- Prevent interference and abuses by power entities and bodies in a general sense;
- Promote their use by EMBs in consensual activities;
- Establish new consensus and build public trust for its use in more sensitive areas of electoral management.