



World Forum for Democracy

Call for Applications for Cities

Participation in a workshop at the World Forum for Democracy 2015 for supporting local participatory democracy

Cities in member states of the Council of Europe are invited to express their interest in participating in a workshop on how to support and encourage participatory democracy on a local level. The workshop will be part of the World Forum for Democracy 2015 agenda. The Forum is taking place on **18-20 November at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France**. Interested cities are invited to apply for participating in the workshop by sending the questionnaire at page 4 of this document to forum_democracy@coe.int by 15 September 2015. An elected representative of the selected cities will be invited to Strasbourg to participate in the workshop which will be the kick-off event for the creation of a network of participatory democracy supporters. Funded places are available. The World Forum secretariat will select the participating cities at the end of September 2015.

The World Forum for Democracy is an annual gathering of grass-roots activists and political decision-makers to debate key challenges for democracies worldwide. The event is organized by the Council of Europe in collaboration with the French government, the Alsace Region and the City of Strasbourg. The discussions at the Forum are based on initiatives in the field of participatory governance and democracy innovation.

What is the workshop about?

The workshop has one prevalent goal: to develop structures on the local level in order to accelerate the growth and success of initiatives improving citizen participation in European cities. The workshop will be the kick-off event for the creation of a network of 'participatory cities' for which the Council of Europe will provide an array of support resources and networking connections. Cities will be able to use the Council of Europe 'Participatory City' brand for their public relations and external communication.

The workshop brings together participatory democracy innovators/organisations and local political decision-makers to develop the framework of the network, while brainstorming on concrete solutions for increasing the impact and reach of initiatives in the field of participatory democracy, in order to improve citizen's political involvement on the local level. The workshop gathers resources, skills and expertise needed to assist local authorities seeking to improve service delivery and the power of citizens to make their voices heard in local politics. This involves entirely new tactics and processes in the field of democratic participation.

The workshop is the beginning of a broader project with the aim of creating a network of 'participatory cities' in Europe. The project will be organized by the Council of Europe as a follow up to the World Forum for Democracy to implement the initiatives presented at different Forum editions in European cities.

What's in it for cities?

Cities gain enormously from implementing structures of participatory governance at the local level. The following advantages for local authorities can be identified:

- **Increased legitimacy** of elected leaders through the exchange with citizens and increased support for political agendas.
- **Better service delivery**: Initiatives that bring decision-makers and citizens closer together help decision-makers identify areas of interest among population groups and gauge the mood surrounding policies. This will help the city deliver services and engage in projects that are close to the citizens.
- Innovative projects will get **public/media attention** and improve the image of the city. Cities will be able to use the Council of Europe 'Participatory City' branding for their public relations and external communication.
- **More inclusiveness**: New forms of participation, such as the ones that utilize art or the internet, can arouse the interest of citizens that have never before felt inclined to participate in the democratic process, rather than attract people who were already interested. This way, individuals or social groups that have felt alienated from the decision-making process will be stimulated to communicate their ideas and concerns.
- **Increased creativity** for the solution of problems: Platforms that allow citizens to submit their own ideas generate an experimental attitude and encourage people to come up with creative ways to improve living conditions in the city.
- **Better informed citizens** through direct involvement in the city's policy-making processes.
- **Support by the Council of Europe**: advice of leading international experts and privileged access to citizen participation tools.

Which experts and projects in the field of participatory democracy can I expect at the workshop?

Citizens Jury

Citizens' Jury is a mechanism that draws on the symbolism, and some of the practices, of a legal trial by jury. It generally includes three main elements: The "jury" is made up of people who are usually selected "at random" from a local or national population, with the selection process open to outside scrutiny. The jurors cross-question expert "witnesses" — specialists they have called to provide different perspectives on the topic — and collectively produce a summary of their conclusions, typically in a short report. The whole process is supervised by an oversight or advisory panel composed of a range of people with relevant knowledge and a possible interest in the outcome. They take no direct part in facilitating the citizens' jury. Members of this group subsequently decide whether to respond to, or act on, elements of this report.

- Mr Iain WALKER, Australia, new Democracy Foundation

Crowdsourcing in Policy and Lawmaking

Crowdsourcing is applied in law-making processes in first mapping problems regarding the law and then finding solutions to those problems. Crowdsourcing as problem solving is used on an online platform with gamification features such as gathering points and badges.

- Ms Tanja AITAMURTO, Finland, University of Stanford

➤ Citizen online and offline deliberation and consultation

The goal of CiviQ is to enable fair and transparent engagement of all social perspectives during consultations and deliberations on a policy issue in order to enhance the sustainability of the outcome. The process captures and analyses a broad stream of naturally expressed opinion on an issue (e.g. in newspapers, radio interviews, interviews etc) and opinions expressed during consultations. A small number of participants are asked to subjectively evaluate the statements by ranking them in a particular grid. From these data they extract the main narratives or social discourses on an issue. During live deliberations, this method is used to support visualisation of opinion positions and changes during the course of the meeting.

- Ms Vanessa LISTON, Ireland, Co-founder of CiviQ

➤ Online petitions and drafting of legislation

On the Open Ministry online platform citizens propose petitions online. According to the Citizens Initiative Act those petitions have to be discussed in the Parliament if they gather 50,000 signatures in 6 months. Apart from gathering signatures, Open Ministry drafts the actual bills based on petitions with volunteer lawyers and other experts.

- Mr Joonas PEKKANEN, Finland, Founder of Open Ministry

➤ Citizen Networks

Every place is a network of interconnected networks. The Democratic Society considers how we can use existing free tools to create connections and democratic conversations between government, campaigners and influential active citizens such as school association chairs, bloggers and parish councillors.

- Mr Anthony ZACHARZEWSKI, United Kingdom, Co-founder of The Democratic Society

➤ 'Your Priorities': Citizen Consultation

Citizens Foundation open source e-Democracy web application is called Your Priorities and is running Better Reykjavik where over 70.000 people from a population of 120.000 have participated. The Citizens Foundation won the European e-Democracy Awards in 2011 and has won numerous Icelandic awards for innovation and participation. Their mission is to connect citizens with their representatives and increase trust and participation in democracy, especially by young people.

- Mr Róbert Viðar BJARNASON, Iceland, President of the Citizens Foundation

➤ Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy is a form of democracy in which deliberation is central to decision-making. It adopts elements of both consensus decision-making and majority rule. Deliberative democracy differs from traditional democratic theory in that authentic deliberation, not mere voting, is the primary source of legitimacy for the law. Initiatives in the field of deliberative democracy include participatory budgeting, town hall meetings, deliberative polling, or citizen juries.

- Mr Matt LEIGHNINGER, USA, Executive Director of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium

➤ Wikicity

Wikicity is designed to provide visibility for causes created by the population, promoting stronger citizenship, social commitment and shared responsibility. The platform's operation is based on the methodology of social intelligence, formed by four axes: Culture of Citizenship, Ethics of Care, Shared responsibility and Civic Engagement. Through these joint axes, the team responsible for the wikicity online platform mobilises face-to-face and digital actions through social networks, volunteers' meetings and events.

- Mr Daniel DE ANDRADE BITTENCOURT, Brasil, Co-founder of Lung

➤ Online platform for collective decision-making (DemocracyOS)

DemocracyOS is an open source online platform designed for parliaments and other collective decision-making institutions, that allows citizens to get informed, join the conversation and vote how they want their representatives to vote. It empowers citizens, allowing them to bring about a more inclusive, collaborative, open and intelligent social system and seeks to recover a robust public debate as a collective cause.

- Ms Pia MANCINI, Argentina, Director of Net Democracy

Crowdfunding of local projects (Citizinvestor)

There are countless government projects in the U.S. and around the world that are not completed due to lack of funding. These are projects like building new parks, renovating neighbourhood pools and adding bike lanes - projects that governments want to take on and citizens want to invest in, but often can't. Crowdfunding focused on government projects is sprouting up in the U.S. and abroad, giving citizens a direct say in where government spends their money for the first time in history. In this lab, Citizinvestor – a crowdfunding platform for government projects in the U.S - will present the different models for civic crowd funding and will lead a discussion on the biggest questions surrounding this new form of civic participation.

- Mr Jordan Tyler RAYNOR, USA, Co-founder of Citizinvestor

➤ Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making, and a type of participatory democracy, in which ordinary people decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget. Participatory budgeting allows citizens to identify, discuss, and prioritize public spending projects, and gives them the power to make real decisions about how money is spent. When PB is taken seriously and is based on mutual trust local governments and citizen can benefit equally. In some cases PB even raised people's willingness to pay taxes.

Experts

Mr Steven CLIFT, USA, Founder and Executive Director of E-Democracy.org

Mr Hems ZWIER, Netherlands, Blogger, Social Media advisor

Mr Romain SLITINE, France, Project Odyssem, Social Innovation Incubator

Ms Elsa LEWIS, France, Project Odyssem, Social Innovation Incubator



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Application for Cities

Participation in a kick-off workshop at the World Forum for Democracy 2015 for the creation of a network of participatory cities

Country:
City:
Number of inhabitants:
Contact person (Mr/Ms):
Address:
Telephone:
Mobile phone:
E-mail:
Website:
Social media page:
Please describe your motivation to participate in the participatory cities network.
Do structures, mechanisms or initiatives already exist in your city to consult citizens in different policy fields or to include citizens in local decision-making? Please describe the means available.

Has the city allocated a budget for citizen consultation and participation?
What are your plans for the future to increase citizen participation in your city?
How can the Council of Europe help you to implement your plans on improving citizens' political participation in your city?
Any additional relevant information/references.