

ECoD NPO

Activity Report 2022

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Introduction and overview

ECoD NPO was established in December 2021 to prepare and implement the European Capital of Democracy initiative.

In accordance with the organisation's purpose (to promote democratic governance, strengthen social cohesion by promoting and expanding democratic participation and awareness, and by strengthening established and new forms of democratic practice in Europe), activities have included the following:

- **January to May:**
Information campaign in preparation for the call
- **March to June:**
Public call for participation of European cities, more than 10 info workshops for over 50 interested city representatives.
- **July:**
Review of the 22 declarations of interest submitted for participation.
- **August to December:**
Online campaign to recruit the (planned) 10,000 members of the Citizens' Jury in all Council of Europe member states as well as Kosovo.
- **August and September:**
Supporting candidates in finalising their application
- **October:**
Kick-off event of the first ECoD city network meeting in Vienna. The network comprises 13 cities from eight countries
- **November:**
Visits of possible seven shortlisted candidates by the Experts' Jury
- **December:**
Announcement of the shortlist by the expert jury (Barcelona, Braga and Brussels)
- **December (planned until 15 January 2023):**
Voting by the Citizens' Jury for the first European Capital of Democracy

Raising awareness and publicising the initiative

To promote the call, 750 particularly relevant cities were selected and 350 of them were specifically informed. Furthermore, 670 municipal tourism organisations and civil society institutions were contacted in order to offer the cities incentives to participate from different sides.

In order to publicise the Citizens' Jury as widely as possible, a cooperation with Alliance4Europe was established. Together, around 350 existing contacts to organisations were used and more than 750 new organisations as well as important multipliers such as Members of the European Parliament were contacted.

The buoyant and successful launch of the initiative, with 6,000 social media followers, around 3,000 newsletter contacts, 100 partner organisations and 13 active member cities in the ECoD network, has succeeded in renewing the patronage of both the Vice-President of the European Commission - Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić.

Activities and first successes

Already in the first year of activity, which was marked by the establishment of Europe-wide awareness, structures and processes, numerous significant and widely received activities could be implemented, including

- Conducting and presenting a democracy survey among the members of the Citizens' Jury for the World Forum for Democracy of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (November)
- Holding an official fringe event of the European Week of Regions and Cities, a panel discussion followed by working groups on the topic of "Digital Tools - Connecting Cities and Citizens"
- Presentation of the initiative at two Eurocities Conventions (in Esbo, Finland, in June and in Vienna, Austria, at the end of November).
- Held more than ten workshops at numerous European events, including the World Forum for Modern Direct Democracy in Lucerne (September), the European Union Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Festival in Brussels (October) or the International Observatory for Participatory Democracy in Grenoble (December).
- Submission to various foundations (including Bertelsmann, Herrhausen and Porticus) or participation in relevant European calls as lead partner, consortium participant or subcontractor:
 - European Commission / CERV
Citizens: Jury, Recruitment and Implementation - Focus EU-27 (2022-24)
 - City of Vienna / MA7 - Democracy in Progress
Citizens' Jury Prototyping and Events (2022-2023)
 - BMKOES / Arts and Culture Promotion
Art of Democracy Pilot Format Development (2022)
 - European Commission / Creative Europe
Art of Democracy Piloting and Implementation (2022-2024)
 - European Endowment for Democracy / Grant
Citizens' Jury, Recruitment and Implementation - Focus non-EU (2022-24)

Outlook and further steps

As the activities of the society have the overarching goal of identifying, developing, promoting and applying socio-political innovations in order to strengthen democracy in Europe and beyond, established non-profit formats of the Innovation in Politics Institute such as the Innovation in Politics Awards or the ACT NOW International Mayors' Conference will be integrated into the ECoD non-profit GmbH from 2023/24 onwards whenever possible.

Furthermore, a group of high-ranking supporters from the business community (CEOs for Democracy) is currently being established, who will become "ambassadors" of the initiative in exchange for a membership fee and will meet around the European Democracy Capital Programme Year.

To ensure long-term and broadest possible societal benefits, we see

- In the area of **identity building**, the establishment of the Citizens' Jury with up to 10,000 citizens from the member states of the Council of Europe and Kosovo is a fundamental contribution to activating and involving as many citizens as possible. A particular success is the participation in an international project together with ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy, project leader) in the 12-14 months before the European elections in 2024, financially supported by the European Parliament.
- The areas of **future viability** and **sustainability** with a focus on future generations, including through the promotion of education, participation and digital literacy among children and young people, as well as sustainable solutions that contribute to peaceful and democratic coexistence in a safe and clean environment, will be at the centre of the programme year of the first European Democracy Capital. Preparations for this are underway and the opening will take place on 15 September 2023.

Activities already started for the realisation of the objectives

- Planning, financing, preparation, organisation, participation in and implementation of events (in particular conferences, dialogue events, courses, seminars, lectures),
- Organising competitions, offering and awarding prizes (existing Innovation in Politics Awards, newly planned Innovation in Society Awards for the Western Balkans) for outstanding achievements in the field of democracy, the creation of democratic awareness, the further development, promotion and organisation of democratic processes in politics and civil society,
- Establishment, organisation, support and management of structures or institutions that enable or support participatory selection and decision-making processes (citizens' jury),
- Promote networking and exchange in support of relevant democratic and (civil) society actors via existing as well as newly created databases, lists, platforms or otherwise in an appropriate way (in preparation for February/March 2023)
- Publication of electronic and printed media of all kinds, including apps (call document for interested cities, evaluation platform for the expert jury, selection tool for the citizen jury, etc.).

Required financial resources

In the start-up phase, special focus is placed on:

- Funding by public institutions (e.g. City of Vienna, European Commission, European Parliament)
- Targeting European and international foundations as founding partners
- Networking with existing city networks and transatlantic initiatives (e.g. German Marshall Fund of the United States / GMF Cities, NED, USAID, IRI).
- Private funding (fundraising and stakeholder management)
- Revenue from (pilot) events
- Cooperation around the Cities Network and the Citizens' Jury