

ECoD NPO

Activity Report 2023

21 December 2023, SHS

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**
 - [ECoD 2023/24 announcement in Barcelona](#)
- **February**
 - [City Network meeting in Sarajevo](#)
- **March**
 - [Programme Presentation](#) in Barcelona
 - Opening of [ECoD 2024/25 - Call for Applications](#)
- **March-June**
 - Citizens' Jury recruiting campaign 01
- **March to August**
 - Steering group meetings with the City of Barcelona to prepare the Programme Year
- **April**
 - Receptions and update meetings with [Marija Pejčinović Burić](#), Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and [Dubravka Šuica](#), Vice-President of the European Commission at the ECoD office in Vienna
- **May**
 - ECoD at [Innovation in Politics Awards and Convention](#), announcement [IPA24 \(Barcelona\)](#)
 - [City Network Meeting in Warsaw](#)
- **June**
 - [City Network Meeting in Valongo](#)
- **June to July**
 - Review of ECoD 2024/25 Applications
 - Announcement of the second round of contenders: [Eight new City Network members](#)
- **July to September**
 - Programme Year preparations
 - Citizens' Jury recruiting campaign 02 (3,500+ members from 47 European countries)

- **August**
 - ECoD co-hosting a [European Forum Alpbach City Lab](#)
 - [Special Partnership with the City of Kyiv](#)
- **September**
 - [ECoD 2023/24 Programme Presentation](#) in Barcelona (review on [Youtube](#), visit [Programme Year Website](#)). The Vice-President of the European Commission Dubravka Šuica (in person) and the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs José Albares (per video live statement) embraced the initiative.
 - Kick-off of the EP-funded [TALE project](#) in seven European countries together with ALDA Europe to train 56 change-makers and activate 5.600+ citizens for the European Elections 2023
- **September to October**
 - ECoD Experts' Jury city visits to [Gdansk](#), [Tirana](#), [Bratislava](#), [Vienna](#), [Leipzig](#) and [Izmir](#)
- **October**
 - [ECoD at the EU Regions Week](#) on “Getting Locals Involved in the European Elections: is Citizen Participation the Answer?”
 - [City Network Meeting in Barcelona](#) with new member cities - 35 participants from 13 countries
 - Second survey in cooperation with the Council of Europe [“Democracy = Peace \(?\)”](#) to be presented at the World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg in November
 - Finalisation of CERV grant agreement for Network of Towns project “European City Network”
- **November**
 - [Experts' Jury shortlists 5 cities](#) (Bratislava, Gdansk, Izmir, Leipzig, Vienna)
 - [ACT NOW Mayors' Conference 2023](#) on Empowering Local Democracy for Ukraine's Renewal in Brussels
 - [Citizens' Jury survey on “Democracy = Peace?”](#) presentation at the Council of Europe's World Forum for Democracy
- **December**
 - [Citizens' Jury selects second European Capital of Democracy - Vienna](#)
 - [European City Network project starts](#)

Raising awareness and publicising the initiative

In order to publicise European Capital of Democracy as widely as possible, media partnerships with EURACTIV and The European Correspondent and cooperations with 25+ Europe-wide organisations, including Alliance4Europe, have been formed. A cooperation Agreement with the DG COMM at European Parliament is currently finalised.

The buoyant and vivid implementation of the initiative, with a vivid Programme Year launch in Barcelona and 21 active member cities from 13 countries in the ECoD City 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 successes

The second full 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)
- (Co-)hosting events at
 - the European Week of Regions and Cities
 - The European Forum Alpbach
 - TED Europe workshop in Brussels
 - CoE civil society workshop in Strasbourg
 - further national and international events
- Investments and financial support by
 - Patricia Kahane (President, Karl Kahane Foundation)
 - Porticus
 - GIZ / U-LEAD with Europe
- Activities in the framework of European calls as lead partner, consortium partner or subcontractor:
 - European Commission / CERV
 - Network of Towns: European City Network (ECN) - funded and started
 - European Parliament
 - TALE - TAKE the Lead in EU elections - funded and implemented
 - Council of Europe
 - Citizens' Jury survey - funded and implemented
 - BMKOES / Arts and Culture Promotion
 - Art of Democracy Pilot Format Development (2022) - funded and planned

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 have been integrated into the ECoD non-profit GmbH and will take place in the title-holding European Capital of Democracy, starting with Barcelona in 2024.

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

- In the area of **identity building**, the establishment of the Citizens' Jury with 5-10,000 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.
- 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, are at the centre of Barcelona's Programme Year.

