

# THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

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## **Resolution 430 (2018)<sup>1</sup> European Local Democracy Week (ELDW): a new momentum**

1. In their declaration adopted during the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Local and Regional Government held on 16 October 2007 in Valencia, Spain, the ministers supported the initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to launch the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) in recognition of the importance of increasing citizen participation in decision making at the grass-roots level and introducing participatory mechanisms into our democratic systems.

2. The ELDW serves to foster dialogue between residents and public authorities, by bringing them together in joint activities to hear each other's concerns, decide on priorities for the community and improve the functioning of local government.

3. Over the years, the European Local Democracy Week has become a truly pan-European initiative. More than 1 000 local and regional authorities and their associations have organised public activities aimed at promoting and fostering citizens' democratic participation at grass-roots level, especially by raising their awareness of the functioning of local authorities, as well as to inform them of the opportunities for taking part in local decision-making processes.

4. In 2017, the European Local Democracy Week marked its 10th anniversary. On this occasion, the Congress, in its Resolution 423 (2017),<sup>2</sup> renewed its commitment to advancing this initiative further and established a Reflection Group to take the ELDW forward to a new dimension. The Reflection Group held three meetings in March, June and September 2018, during which it considered various aspects relating to the ELDW. The group's proposals were submitted to the national co-ordinators of the initiative.

5. In the light of the above, the Congress:

*a.* thanks the Reflection Group for its commitment and its work to give the ELDW fresh impetus and to further develop it for the benefit of local and regional authorities and citizens across Europe;

*b.* adopts the Reflection Group's proposals for new organisational rules regarding the duration of the ELDW, the means of rewarding the most outstanding activities and the strategy for developing the initiative's outreach and network, as appended to this resolution;

*c.* decides that these changes will enter into effect as from 2019.

## **Appendix**

### **New organisational rules for the European Local Democracy Week**

#### **1. Date, duration and timeline of the ELDW**

*a.* In order to allow for more flexibility and for a greater number of events to be organised, the municipalities are encouraged to organise events and activities in accordance with the theme of the ELDW during the whole year, culminating in a flagship event in the week of 15 October.

*b.* The week of 15 October is maintained as the official ELDW date, as it is the anniversary date of the opening for signature of the European Charter for Local Self-Government. This week also corresponds to the launch of the ELDW, on 16 October 2007.

*c.* The annual co-ordination meeting will continue to be held at the beginning of the year. It shall bring together the national co-ordinators and ELDW participants wishing to attend. It shall present the evaluation of the previous ELDW as well as some of its outstanding initiatives and establish the theme for the next two years to come. This biennial theme can be adapted from one year to another, depending on the chosen focus.

#### **2. Procedures for identifying, rewarding and enhancing visibility of the most outstanding initiatives**

*a.* To highlight the commitment to raising citizens' awareness of local democracy and encouraging them to make use of all the opportunities provided through participatory democratic processes, the most active participating local authorities taking part in the ELDW can request the title of "Partner of the European Local Democracy Week [Year]".

*b.* This title is granted a posteriori, based on actual participation and the report on activities, in order to guarantee that the participants respected the criteria regarding the nature, scale and possible impact of events/activities, listed as follows:

1. Allocate a specific budget for citizens' participation.

2. Run an ELDW promotion campaign (posters, promotion of activities at school, etc.) using the ELDW visual identity decided upon and provided by the Congress.

3. Carry out a number of specific activities linked to the leading theme of the year.

4. Organise an event with a European or pan-European dimension to illustrate the role of local authorities in the construction of a democratic Europe – a Congress representative may be invited to this main event.

5. Inclusiveness: extend the social scope of the initiative by reaching out to different groups of citizens, especially the groups that can feel excluded (children, the elderly, women, Roma and Travellers, people with a disability, minorities, etc.).

6. Promote the engagement of young people and youth organisations, including by involving or creating youth councils.

7. Implement sustainable initiatives thereby creating an environment in which citizens and local authorities share the same long-term goals, namely to reinforce citizens' awareness and participation in decision making.

8. Implement innovative activities and projects.

*c.* On the basis of the activity reports provided by the participants requesting the title of "Partner of the European Local Democracy Week [Year]", the Bureau of the Congress, at its first meeting of the year, will approve the granting of the title.

*d.* On the occasion of the annual co-ordination meeting, the Thematic Spokesperson on the ELDW, on behalf of the Congress President, will present the "Partner of the European Local Democracy Week [Year]" certificates to the most active participants of the previous ELDW.

### 3. Developing the outreach of the ELDW

*a.* The municipalities are invited to nominate a personality with local influence as "Voice of the ELDW", whose role would be to promote the initiative as its goodwill ambassador, to allow for a wider outreach. This person should be active in the community, especially with young people, and committed to expanding the ELDW outreach and inclusiveness. This representative would be responsible for encouraging active citizenship and promoting citizen participation and dialogue with local authorities, as well as the key principles of local democracy (including ethics, transparency, good governance, etc.).

*b.* The Congress youth delegates are strongly encouraged to participate in the ELDW activities of their municipality or even to lead an ELDW event. The project to be undertaken by the youth delegates between the two sessions of the Congress could touch upon this topic.

### 4. Creating an independent network of exchange of good practices

*a.* The ELDW participants are encouraged to actively promote exchanges of information and good practice between them, especially by using social media and the upcoming online platform of the ELDW website, with a view to developing an independent network for direct interaction and experience sharing, and possibly establishing a Partnership of Cities for Citizen Participation.

*b.* The Congress members and youth delegates should promote the ELDW and share information about their activities in the framework of the initiative, including on social media.

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1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 6 November 2018, 1st sitting (see Document [CG35\(2018\)11](#), explanatory memorandum), Congress Spokesperson on the European Local Democracy Week: Gaye DOGANOGLU, Turkey (L, EPP/CCE).

2. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 20 October 2017, 3rd sitting (see Document [CG33\(2017\)12](#)), Congress Spokesperson on the European Local Democracy Week: Gaye DOGANOGLU, Turkey (L, EPP/CCE).