

Press Release

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ELDW 2010: Launch of activities in over 100 European towns and cities

Strasbourg, 11.10.2010 – As part of European Local Democracy Week (ELDW), from 11 to 17 October 2010, over 100 towns and cities in 25 European countries, from Portugal to Russia, are embarking on programmes of activities open to citizens.

European Local Democracy Week is an annual event which takes place around 15 October in the Council of Europe member states. Its aim is to foster greater citizen awareness of local authorities, promote citizen participation in local governance and stress the importance played by local democracy in building a united and democratic Europe.

Among the towns and cities taking part are some with considerable experience in this pan-European initiative – Brussels (Belgium), Strasbourg and Aix-en-Provence (France), Candelaria (Spain), Odessa (Ukraine) and Ierapetra (Greece) – but there are also some taking part for the very first time, such as Paris, Lausanne, Liège, Amadora (Lisbon), Katowice, Antalya, Belgrade, Tbilisi and the Italian municipalities of Mola di Bari and the Unione Terre di Po. The EDLW initiative, launched in 2007, is set to extend beyond the borders of Europe: as from 2011, Morocco will organise its own Moroccan Local Democracy Week based on the ELDW experience and in close co-operation with the Congress.

The theme of this year's ELDW is the impact of sustainable communities in fighting climate change. The debates will focus on 5 main issues: transport and mobility, waste management, using renewable energy sources, saving water and biodiversity.

ELDW is an initiative of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which is responsible for overall co-ordination of the event. For 2010, the Congress is also co-organising two conferences in Strasbourg:

The first is looking at the integration of foreign residents in local public life and will be jointly organised with Strasbourg City Council on 15 October at the Palais de l'Europe (Room 1) in Strasbourg; it will be followed by a meeting at the Strasbourg City Council Offices (Centre Administratif), with the aim of setting up a network of Foreign Residents Councils in France.

The second, entitled "Young people, climate change and water: challenges for local and regional development and impact on the most disadvantaged" will be organised in conjunction with Schiltigheim Municipal Council and Solidarité Eau Europe. It will be held on 16 October at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. It will provide an opportunity for delegations of young people and local elected representatives from a variety of countries such as Croatia, Lithuania, Moldova and the Russian Federation to exchange views and experiences with their counterparts in Schiltigheim and with experts and members of the Congress.