

The Bureau of the Congress

CG-BUR(2025)63-12¹
27 January 2025

Partner of the European Local Democracy Week 2024 - Candidatures

Introduction

This document presents the 17 local and regional authorities and 2 association (19 applicants in total) which requested the title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week” in 2024 following their active participation in the European Local Democracy Week. The Bureau is asked to examine this request.

Action required: for decision

¹ This document is classified as confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress.

On 6 November 2018, the Congress adopted Resolution 430 (2018) on new modalities of the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW), creating a new momentum for this initiative.

In order to highlight the active commitment of certain municipalities and associations to raising the citizens' awareness on local democracy, the new modalities provide for granting local authorities taking part in the ELDW the title "Partner of the European Local Democracy Week". This new title replaces the "12 Stars" status awarded until 2018.

This title is granted *a posteriori*, based on the criteria established by Resolution 430(2018)², upon the actual participation and report on activities. These criteria were revised in June 2023 by the Bureau³. To receive the title, municipalities and associations need to:

1. Allocate a specific budget for citizens' participation;
2. Run an ELDW promotion campaign (posters, promotion of activities at school...) 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 raise awareness about the Council of Europe and its Congress and 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. Extend the social scope of the initiative by reaching out to different groups of citizens, especially the groups that can feel excluded (children, elderly, women, Roma and Travellers, people with a disability, minorities...);
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.

In addition, the resolution recommends designating a local person of influence as the Voice of the ELDW, in order to raise awareness of the initiative and improve its outreach.

² See Appendix 1

³ See Appendix 3

PROPOSAL FOR A BUREAU DECISION

In 2024, 17 local authorities and 2 association (19 applicants in total) requested to be granted the title “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week 2024”⁴. Their requests were submitted through registration on the application form published on the ELDW website. Based on the information provided, **19 of them** have fulfilled the required criteria⁵.

The Secretariat of the Congress therefore proposes that the Congress Bureau grant the title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week 2024” to 17 municipalities and 2 associations listed below:

1. Municipality of Agii Anargiri – Kamatero (Greece)
2. Municipality of Ahmetbey (Türkiye)
3. Municipality of Alimos (Greece)
4. Municipality of Altieylul (Türkiye)
5. Municipality of Beykoz (Türkiye)
6. Municipality of Besiktas (Türkiye)
7. Municipality of Büyükçekmece (Türkiye)
8. Municipality of Cascais (Portugal)
9. Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye)
10. Municipality of Kırklareli (Türkiye)
11. Municipality of Kristiansand (Norway)
12. Kyiv City Council (Ukraine)
13. Municipality of Konak (Türkiye)
14. Local Councils’ Association (Malta)
15. Municipality of Lüleburgaz (Türkiye)
16. Marmara Municipalities Union (Türkiye)
17. City of Minsk Mazowiecki (Poland)
18. City of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
19. Municipality of Valongo (Portugal)

⁴ See Appendix 4

⁵ See Appendix 4

Appendix 1

Applications received

1. Municipality of Agii Anargiri – Kamatero

The municipality of Agii Anargiri – Kamatero participated in the ELDW for the first time this year. It is mentioned that the participatory process was mainly covered by European funded projects. The municipality mainly focused on awareness raising about “Building Vulnerability to Energy Poverty” and “Energy efficient building renovations”. Youth and elderly were mostly involved around these events.

2. Municipality of Ahmetbey (Türkiye)

Being one of the long-term partners of ELDW, Ahmetbey Municipality conducted diverse activities in alignment with this year’s theme. Several of these activities included a visit to cooperatives to discuss climate-resilient agriculture, organising a “Child Mayors” initiative for local democracy awareness, hosting a competition to enhance knowledge about Council of Europe member states, and conducting sessions with class presidents to address local issues. Additionally, they facilitated cultural exchanges, youth training on climate awareness, and celebrated European Mobility Week to promote active lifestyles.

3. Municipality of Alimos (Greece)

As a second time participant in the ELDW, municipality of Alimos has allocated a total of € 3,000 for ELDW related activities. It has organised several activities promoting local democracy such as the “6th Panhellenic Disability Fashion Show” to support inclusivity, theatrical performances addressing violence against women, and environmental education initiatives for children. Additionally, they actively participated in international events like the “Greengaged Citizens” program held in Spain, focusing on local climate action.

4. Municipality of Altieylül (Türkiye)

The Altieylül Municipality, first time participating in ELDW, engaged in several civic engagement and local democracy activities. They launched the “Café Talks” initiative, which organised neighborhood meetings in rural areas to connect the mayor with citizens, particularly vulnerable groups like the elderly, to discuss local needs and ensure their concerns were addressed. The municipality also introduced the “Democracy Starts at School” program, promoting democratic principles among students and encouraging youth participation. Additionally, they established a “Children’s Council,” enabling children aged 8–14 to engage in municipal decision-making processes. These initiatives emphasized inclusivity, sustainability, and innovation, particularly in reaching underrepresented groups such as rural residents and young people.

5. Municipality of Beykoz (Türkiye)

Beykoz municipality organized various activities promoting civic participation and local democracy, including neighborhood meetings to engage citizens directly. Also they have realized a Green School Project to enhance recycling awareness in schools, and a Biodiversity Webinar for youth under an Erasmus+ project. Additionally, they conducted inclusive initiatives such as an Accessible Life Festival for people with disabilities and projects employing disabled citizens in recycling activities.

6. Municipality of Beşiktaş (Türkiye)

Continuously participating in the ELDW since 2015, Besiktas has undertaken various activities to promote civic engagement and local democracy. They organised public workshops and forums to involve citizens in strategic planning and governance discussions. Youth were included by collaboration with NGO’s, hosting Erasmus Days and creating a “Project Point” hub for young people to participate in international activities. Efforts are also made to include the women, people with disabilities and foreign residents, ensuring diverse community participation in governance.

7. Municipality of Büyükçekmece (Türkiye)

Since 2012 the municipality of Büyükçekmece has been a partner of the ELDW. A budget of €106,174

has been allocated to organise activities within the framework of citizen participation. Women's empowerment, gender equality, youth councils' sustainable energy and climate actions plans were made in a participatory way. Büyükçekmece municipality has also realised a program to support Ukraine and hosted fifty Ukrainian children in Türkiye who were affected by the war in their country.

8. Municipality of Cascais (Portugal)

The municipality of Cascais participated in ELDW for the sixth time in 2024. From 2012 to 2023, Cascais continued to invest in the Municipality's Pluriannual Investment Plan in projects proposed by citizens. This year the municipality implemented several actions to enhance civic engagement and local democracy. The Participatory budget (PB) project allowed citizens to allocate €6 million for projects, with a record of 64,157 participants casting 128,286 votes. Furthermore, it has also implemented "Reinvent Your Neighborhood" initiative which empowered citizens to co-create improvements in their communities, fostering social cohesion through projects like community gardens and intergenerational activities. Youth engagement was highlighted through the Youth Participatory Budget and educational initiatives like "Scholas de Cidadania" promoting active citizenship among students.

9. Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye)

The municipality of Edremit has an ongoing engagement in the ELDW since 2017. This year Edremit implemented several initiatives within the context of enhancing local democracy such as; creation of a "Youth Climate Council", preparation of the first "Women Policy Paper" with the participation of women to advocate for gender equality, inclusion of Roma women and hearing of impaired individuals in projects promoting their participation in local decision-making processes and also supported the sharing of council regulations and proposals through a digital platform, to enhance transparency and inclusivity.

10. Municipality of Kırklareli (Türkiye)

The municipality of Kırklareli has been participating in ELDW since 2020... This year the municipality mainly focused on events realised with high school students where interactive events and trainings were held to promote Council of Europe and local democracy. These events were decided to be realised annually to ensure the sustainability of the activities and to show commitment to connecting youth with the decision makers.

11. Municipality of Kristiansand (Norway)

Kristiansand municipality, participating for the first time in the European Local Democracy Week, completed over 40 events emphasizing civic participation and local democracy. Activities included Youth Conference on Democracy and Human Rights, a workshop on freedom of expression, a Democracy simulation game for students, and a significant initiative, the Kristiansand Conversation, involving interfaith dialogue across Europe. Also, a pan-European event was organised in collaboration with the Council of Europe, marking 75th anniversary of the CoE..

12. Kyiv City Council (Ukraine)

The City of Kyiv has been participating in ELDW since 2022. This year Kyiv has implemented several events like "Academy of Women's Leadership", "Vcentri HUB network" and "Leadership Academy" for the youth. These activities were founded upon citizen-oriented approach ensuring the support for the diverse groups at local level. Other initiatives such as participatory budgeting, youth leadership programs and citywide competitions foster active citizen involvement and transparency. Additionally, "Open Government Week" and anti-corruption programs were organised all in scope of enhancing democratic resilience and governance.

13. The Municipality of Konak (Türkiye)

The Municipality of Konak organized events throughout the year 2024 within the aims of raising awareness and develop solutions to global issues such as climate change, social equality and the environment in a more participative way. Konak has actively engaged its citizens in participatory initiatives, fostering inclusivity and democratic resilience within the community by close collaboration with the CSO`s. It has recognized the challenges faced by the Roma population and has developed a Roma Action Plan in partnership with Roma associations, addressing social integration, education, and employment to amplify participation in society. Additionally, the establishment of climate awareness center under the "SPACE" Project became a hub for citizen engagement, particularly for young people,

offering workshops and training to build awareness and collective action around climate-related challenges. Women, children and refugees were also actively involved in the trainings where they identified local challenges and developed solutions, reinforcing social resilience.

14. Local Councils' Association (Malta)

A total budget of €112.206 was allocated by the Local Councils' Association for the ELDW activities in 2024. The association has engaged in diverse civic engagement and local democracy activities. These included organising Robotics and Virtual Reality courses during ALL DIGITAL Weeks to foster education in underrepresented localities and holding seminars to enhance digitalisation readiness in communities. Wellness sessions to promote elderly well-being and summer camps for Ukrainian Children were also organised.

15. Municipality of Lüleburgaz (Türkiye)

The Municipality of Lüleburgaz has been organising events in accordance with the themes of the ELDW since 2011 and the budget allocated to the ELDW in 2024 was € 6.800. The municipality has determined the year 2024 as the "Year of Disaster and Coordination" with the implementation of activities and projects related to the disasters and coordination of these activities. It has realised many activities such as youth idea marathons, music festivals, educational workshops and conferences on participatory democracy.

16. Marmara Municipalities Union (Türkiye)

The Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) has conducted diverse civic engagement and local democracy initiatives. Their activities focused on fostering resilient societies, social inclusion, and participatory governance under themes like "leaving no one behind." The programs included the "Reclaiming Streets Program," which emphasizes child- and pedestrian-friendly urban designs, and training workshops such as the "Post-Disaster Life Learning Program." They have also organised events like "Let's Talk Together: What Kind of City for Youth?" to promote youth participation in decision-making processes. These initiatives were inclusive, addressing groups such as migrants, women, children, and minorities, and aimed to foster cooperation between local governments and civil society for sustainable, rights-based local governance.

17. City of Minsk Mazowiecki (Poland)

The City of Minsk Mazowiecki participated in the ELDW for the first time in 2024. Minsk city has implemented activities focusing on youth and strengthening local democracy. It has launched a project called "Visions 2045 - Schools as Drivers to Climate Neutrality in Cities", making it a holistic approach where schools are chosen as a role model in reducing carbon footprints, engaging them in achieving local climate and energy targets in partnership with local authorities. As a pan-European event they have implemented "City for the Youth, Youth for the City" program where several workshops on school self-government and a city game prepared by the Polish pupils were held.

18. City of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The City of Sarajevo has participated in the ELDW for the first time in 2024. In line with this year's theme of ELDW, the city has conducted several activities such as "Net Zero Launch Event", "Community of Practice on Citizen Engagement" and "Climate Sarajevo 2024" which all had aimed to encourage and raise the participation of the community ensuring that diverse groups were involved. They have also created an online participatory platform "Decidim" which is designed to enable residents to contribute their opinions and innovative ideas in various municipal projects.

19. Municipality of Valongo (Portugal)

Since 2014, the municipality of Valongo has been participating actively in the ELDW. This year too it has dedicated a specific budget to citizen's participation. Valongo has implemented many diverse activities all reflecting its dedicated commitment to building an informed, more resilient and a better equipped community, proactively addressing to the local and global challenges. Projects designed around youth empowerment through civic engagement projects, promotion of inclusion and combatting discrimination and awareness raising activities can be given as example of this commitment.

Appendix 2

Resolution 430 (2018) adopted on 6 November 2018 during the 35th Session of the Congress regarding modalities of the title for “Partner of the ELDW”⁶

[...]

2. Modalities for identifying, rewarding and enhancing visibility of the most remarkable initiatives

a. To highlight the commitment to raising the 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*, upon the actual participation and report of 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...) 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. Extend the social scope of the initiative by reaching out to different groups of citizens, especially the groups that can feel excluded (children, elderly, women, Roma and Travellers, people with a disability, minorities...)
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. Based on the activity reports provided by the participants requesting the title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week [Year]”, the Bureau, at its first meeting of the year, will approve the granting of the title.

d. On 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 edition.

[...]

⁶ [Resolution 430\(2018\)](#)

Appendix 3

Bureau document CG-BUR (2023)52-43 adopted during the Congress Bureau meeting on June 9th, 2023 regarding the revision of the criteria to obtain the title “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week”⁷

[...]

In light of the Council of Europe Visibility Days – an initiative launched by the Council of Europe in 2023 – it is proposed to make use of the ELDW initiative to raise awareness about the Council of Europe and the Congress, and to include among the criteria for the ELDW Partner title a requirement for an event dedicated to the Council of Europe and/or its Congress. This would serve to ensure that ELDW partner events and activities are linked more closely to the overall efforts and shared values of the Organisation and its work. This would also ensure that ELDW partner cities and municipalities are able to contribute more effectively to informing citizens about their fundamental rights and freedoms and the role the Council of Europe and the Congress play in promoting these outcomes.

As one of the criteria already envisages organisation of an event with a European or pan-European dimension, it is proposed to amend it as formulated below.

Presented by Congress Secretariat

In criterion 4, after the “... dimension”, add the sentence: **“to raise awareness about the Council of Europe and its Congress and”**

The paragraph would read as follows:

“4. Organise an event with a European or pan-European dimension to raise awareness about the Council of Europe and its Congress and to illustrate the role of local authorities in the construction of a democratic Europe. A Congress representative may be invited to this main event;”

⁷ [Document CG-BUR\(2023\)52-43](#)

Appendix 4

Comparative table of the municipalities and associations' criteria fulfilment for the title of "Partner of the European Local Democracy Week"

| Candidates to the Title of "Partner of the ELDW" | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Allocate specific budget ^a | ELDW Communication Campaign | Link with the leading theme | Event with a pan-European Dimension | Inclusiveness | Youth Participation | Permanent Measures | All year-round activities | Flagship Event (Not necessary) |
| Marmara Municipalities Union | Yes No specific amount given | Yes | Yes | No | Yes Youth, migrants, women | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Agii Anargiri – Kamatero | No | No | Yes | No | Yes Youth, elderly | Yes | N/A | Yes | N/A |
| Ahmetbey Municipality | Yes € 8.000 | Yes | Yes | No | Yes Youth - women | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Alimos | Yes € 3.000 | No | Yes | No | Yes Disabled people, elderly, women | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Altieylul | Yes No specific amount given | No | Yes | Yes | Yes Disabled people, elderly, underrepresented people from rural areas | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Beykoz | Yes No specific amount given | No | Yes | Yes | Yes Children, youth, elderly disabled people, sportsmen | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Besiktas | Yes € 4.000 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Children, youth, Women, disabled citizens, elderly | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Büyükçekmece | Yes € 106.174 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Children, youth, women, disabled people, roma people | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Municipality of Cascais | Yes € 5.815.740 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Diverse groups, youth, seniors, disabled citizens | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Edremit | Yes No specific amount given | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Youth, women, Roma people, disabled people | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Municipality of Kırklareli | Yes € 530 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Youth, Roma people, disabled people | Yes | Yes | No | N/A |
| Municipality of Kristiansand | Yes No specific amount given | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes Young people, immigrants and Muslim community | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Kyiv City Council | Yes No specific amount given | N/A | Yes | No | Yes Children, women, elderly, youth | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Konak | Yes No specific amount given | N/A | Yes | Yes | Yes Youth, Roma people, women | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Local Council's Association Malta | Yes € 112.206 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Children, elderly, citizens who have a lack of education | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |
| Municipality of Lüleburgaz | Yes € 6.800 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Women, children, youth, immigrants, disadvantaged groups, children with special needs and adults | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| City of Minsk Mazowiecki | Yes No specific amount given | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Youth, teachers, educators, Ukranian pupils and teachers | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| City of Sarajevo | Yes 3,500 BAM and € 1.200.000 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Marginalized and underrepresented communities, disabled people | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Municipality of Valongo | Yes €315,000.00 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes Children, young people with special needs, immigrants local community, civil society organisations, and policymakers | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|