

The Bureau of the Congress

CG/BUR31(2020)INF08¹
13 January 2020

Congress participation in the World Forum for Democracy 2019

Document submitted for information to the Bureau of the Congress on 3 February 2020

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

The eighth edition of the World Forum for Democracy took place on 6-8 November 2019 and had as its theme “*Is democracy in danger in the information age?*”. Focus was put on freedom of expression, safety of journalists, the place of global information and communication in democratic processes.

As in previous years, the Congress has been closely involved in the preparation and organisation of the Forum, participating in the work of the Steering Committee and supporting the Forum Secretariat as appropriate.

The Congress officially co-sponsored two “labs” (working sessions) of the World Forum for Democracy:

- LAB 2 - Rebuilding trust in institutions
- LAB 9 - Local journalism - at the frontline of the information

The members of the delegation were selected on the basis of the submitted candidatures respecting to the best possible extent the criteria of geographical and political balance, competences and language skills, to participate in the two labs sponsored by the Congress, as well as other labs of particular interest to the Congress.

In consequence, the delegation of the Congress to the 2019 World Forum for Democracy was composed of the following Congress members:

1. BASTIN, Jean-Paul (Belgium, EPP/CCE, L)	Contributor in lab 9
2. COOLS, Marc (Belgium, ILDG, L)	Contributor in lab 2
3. DAWSON, Andrew (United Kingdom, ECR, R)	Contributor in lab 9 (and participant in lab 2)
4. KAVTARADZE, Nino (Georgia, EPP/CEE, L)	Participant in labs of interest to the Congress
5. PAUNOVIC, Sasa (Serbia, SOC, L)	Participant in lab 2

In addition, the Council of Europe’s Democracy Innovation Award was, this year, awarded to an initiative from Lab 2: “Follow the Money”.

This initiative tackles and advocates for a proper utilization of public and international aid funds in rural communities. The idea is for everyone (activists, lawyers, journalists, etc.) to amplify the voice of the marginalized communities by posting on social medias and the mobility platform created to that extent about projects that need funding and tracking the progress of the project and good use of funds.

They use information technologies to provide citizens with evidence-based information about capital funds by government and international aids especially in three thematic areas—health, education and Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), to accelerate social and economic progress.

The initiative has been so successful in Nigeria that it was implemented in 3 other African countries – The Gambia, Kenya and Cameroon; it has over 5,000 volunteers signed up on the social mobilization platform who gather and transmit live data from grassroots communities; and has impacted in 2018 over 2 million lives across 151 grassroot communities tracking \$10.5 million.

The Bureau is invited to take note of the Congress’ participation at the World Forum for Democracy 2019.