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INTRODUCTION

The Winter School, organised by the **Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy of the Council of Europe**, comprised an initial one-day online introductory session on 22 November 2021, followed by a five-day in-person event in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 6-10 December 2021.

Objective

To create a shared understanding and knowledge of Council of Europe's values and standards on civil participation and relevant tools that can then be implemented in participants' specific local contexts.

The Winter School was designed as an interactive learning and sharing event on the theory and practice of participatory democracy for practitioners from local authorities and civil society from **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine**. The working language of the events was English. The 24 participants, selected through an open call for applicants, comprised an equal number of public officials (including elected officials) and civil society representatives.

Standards and tools of the Council of Europe on participatory democracy were presented by international experts with broad experience in the field, and an interactive learning environment provided opportunities to learn about best practice examples, to share experiences and to interact with experts and other practitioners on how to effectively engage citizens in political decision-making.

The Winter School introduced to participants Council of Europe guidelines and standards on participatory policymaking, as well as tools for citizens engagement designed by Council of Europe experts.



SUMMARY OF TRAINING

The **Preparatory Introduction Meeting**, held online, introduced the participants to concepts and values underlying civil participation in political decision-making and shared Council of Europe standards and guidelines on civil participation.

At the **Winter School in Tbilisi**, participants met together for an event that combined presentations, case studies, tools, and models for inclusive citizen engagement with interactive group exercises and discussions. The sessions covered a variety of approaches to citizens engagement, strategies for maximising inclusion, exercises for designing public consultations plans, and included toolkits and case studies on a range of themes pertinent to participatory policymaking, including public space planning, urban planning, and participatory budgeting.

The five-day Winter School introduced the participants to core concepts and standards on day one, including group exercises and international examples of forms of citizens engagement, while Days 2-5 introduced the participants to a variety of tools developed by Council of Europe experts. On all days, strong emphasis was placed on sharing of experience among the participants, and on the final day the participants mapped out plans on how they would implement skills and tools learned during the Winter School



The Winter School provided participants with insights into the type of models and formats for public consultations at different stages in the decision-making processes, and helped them decide whether such a model could be applied to a pressing policy challenge in their municipality/locality.



As well as introducing tools to the participants, the online and offline sessions of the Winter School included presentations and discussions on:

- Council of Europe Standards and Guidelines on Civil Participation in Political Decision-Making
- The Policymaking Cycle and Entry-Points for Citizens Engagement and Participation
- Models, Mechanisms and Levels of Inclusive Citizens Engagement
- Participants' own achievements and challenges in working to increase and strengthen civil participation
- Models of Government-CSO Co-operation
- Civil Society-led Participation in Decision-Making
- Online Participation Tools (Rustavi, Georgia)

Participants were able to apply the models and approaches presented in group exercises that simulated real scenarios on:

- Designing Plans for Public Consultations
- Community Assessment
- Stakeholder Assessment
- Participatory Public Space Planning (game exercise).

Using other game formats, participants worked in groups to simulate how they would apply Council of Europe tools, developed in Ukraine, namely:

- Civic Lab
- UChange
- School Participatory Budgeting toolkit.



The Winter School provided participants with insights into different forms of bottom-up participation where civil society can take a lead or contribute to the framing of key questions and strategy for policymakers.

ACTION PLANS FOR APPLYING TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION

The final day included group work (in country groups) to draw up Action Plans for applying the tools presented at the Winter School to projects, initiatives, and challenges in the participants' own country contexts. The focus of the proposals was as follows:



Action	Tool/process	Country
Self-assessment by municipal councils to foster responsive local policies, improve service provision, and increase citizen participation	Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit	Albania
Develop qualitative and effective decisions at the local government level, including the development of a five-year strategic plan for the municipality of Tirana	CivicLab	Albania
Participatory budgeting with youth	School Participatory Budgeting	Albania
Work on the implementation of public consultations at the time of creation of neighbourhood plans to ensure that the needs of citizens are identified and addressed	Public consultations on public space planning	Albania
Strengthen partnerships between government and the non-governmental sector at the local level with a view to improving provision of public services and to generating proposals for innovative social programmes	Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Solve the problems concerning stray dogs in Ozurgeti municipality	Civil Participation in Decision-Making toolkit	Georgia
Improve intermunicipal co-operation	CivicLab	Georgia
Work with the Congress of Local Authorities in Moldova (CALM) to train local public authorities to work with civil society	Civil Participation in Decision-Making toolkit	Republic of Moldova
Work with CALM on strengthening public consultations in public space planning	Public Consultations in Public Space Planning	Republic of Moldova
Use of the toolkit in the projects of Winter School participants	Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit	Ukraine
Training in the implementation of CivicLab in Boryslav	CivicLab	Ukraine
Apply UChange at the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture	UChange	Ukraine
Application of the toolkit to raise awareness among young people about participatory practices and to increase youth engagement in community life and political decision-making in Chernivtsi, Boryslav, and Bar	School Participatory Budgeting toolkit	Ukraine
Focusing on public consultations in public space planning, improving regulations at the local level, and providing training for facilitators and public officials, with a view to increasing citizen participation and better decisions on public space in Bar and Boryslav	Public Consultations in Public Space Planning	Ukraine

WINTER SCHOOL AGENDA

Winter School Agenda

Tbilisi, Georgia

6-10 December 2021

Day 1: Define Your Policy Projects/Focus and Objectives for the Week

Entry-Points for Citizens Engagement/Levels of Engagment/Design of Public Consultations

Day 2: CLEAR. A Self-Assessment Tool

Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation

Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit

Day 3: Civil Society-Led Participation in Decision-Making

CivicLab

Day 4: UChange

Online Participation Tools

Public Consultations and Civic Engagement in Public Space Planning

Day 5: School Participatory Budgeting

CSO-Government Co-operation Models



CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION- MAKING



School TOOLKIT



CivicLab TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPMENT, ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING OF DECISION OPTIONS IN DECISION-MAKING

TOOLS PRESENTED AT WINTER SCHOOL



Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit

by Centre of Expertise for Good Governance, Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG), Italy (most recent edition: 2020)

<https://rm.coe.int/civil-participation-in-decision-making-toolkit-/168075c1a5>

The toolkit provides, through a step-by-step approach, an integrated framework to guide local authorities in the design and implementation of context-based strategies to identify local stakeholders to be engaged in local decision-making processes, and to increase a community's civil participation.



The toolkit serves as an operational tool to enable local authorities to:

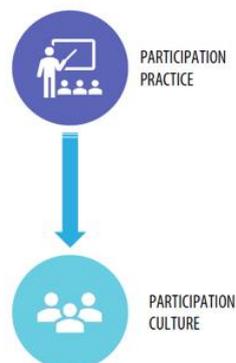
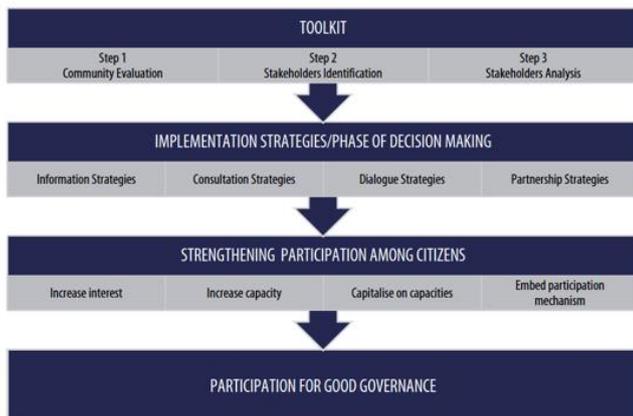
- contextualise the role of civil participation, understand the strengths and weaknesses of their communities to engage in participation, and identify the potential of actual engagement of each stakeholder in the decision-making process,
- adopt strategies to overcome obstacles to effective and inclusive participation, including through the adoption of different levels of involvement at different stages of the decision-making process, and accompanying tools to enhance participation.

The tool is a three-step process:

Step 1. Community Evaluation - aiming at effectively contextualising a participatory decision-making process in line with the community's propensity to participation (including assessing social, economic, human, and political capital)

Step 2. Stakeholder Identification and Evaluation – to identify stakeholders' capacities and willingness to engage.

Step 3. Stakeholder Plotting – The "Stakeholder Evaluation" results in 2 scores (one for RELEVANCE of the stakeholder for the process and one for INTEREST of the stakeholder to engage. Scores are automatically plotted by the tool on a graph, divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a different level of potential involvement of the stakeholder. Based on the quadrant where the stakeholder is located, the Local Authority will have the possibility to implement different strategies to allow its engagement.





CivicLab

by Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe project, "Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine", in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2020)

<https://rm.coe.int/coe-toolkit-civiclab-eng/1680a0cd36>



CivicLab is a toolkit for a participatory approach to the development and design of policy options in decision-making. It is designed to assist central and local authorities and non-governmental organisations in promoting civil participation in decision-making at local, regional, and central government levels.

The tool includes a set of matrices (development and analysis of policy options) that can be adapted to the needs of the chosen policy topic and specific audiences.

The tool can be used for the development of national development strategies, proposals for action plans (e.g. Open Government Partnership commitments), regulations and local decisions, draft laws, and for adopting good practices in citizen engagement.

The CivicLab methodology offers four application components:

1) Digital component – a tool for developing policy proposals and analysis (including assessing realistic feasibility) of the results of decisions during consultations;

2) Educational component – "learning through action", where participants engage in practical exercises using real examples of best practice;

3) Game component (UChange game) – which allows for gamification of the consultations process, making it user-friendly and adapted to the needs of participants;

4) General component – qualitative assessment of audience needs and expectations, and methodology of inclusive selection of participants in the consultation process.



UChange

by Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe project, "Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine", in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2021)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ENXr_hCe5QitOWNQVhvRAQkQeSjRF35r



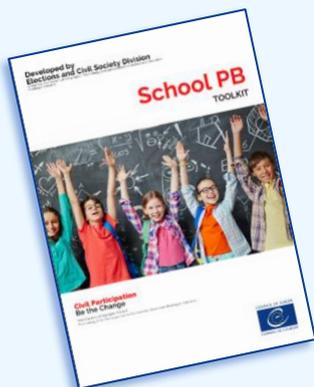
UChange is a tool for teaching the fundamentals of public participation in a game format. UChange can be used in combination with CivicLab, combining CivicLab's educational format of "learning through action" with the UChange game component, which puts this format into practice.

In the context of civil participation, UChange helps citizens learn how to influence the work and decisions of public authorities in a constructive way. Likewise, it helps the representatives of the authorities to engage members of the public on topical policy questions.

Players learn how to interact with public authorities, how to design a model for advocacy and communications in the promotion of their policy choices, and how to assess the impact on the community of the proposed policy. They learn how to advocate for a policy using the civil participation tools and how to engage in meaningful interaction with different levels and branches of the public authorities in accordance with existing legislation and available strategic documents and plans; and take the first steps towards realisation of the proposed policy or decision.

UChange is a game format that makes civil participation in policy-making a user-friendly exercise that can be adapted to the local context and decision-making framework, and tailored to the needs of the participants regardless of their age and knowledge and skills levels. Potential uses of the UChange game range from appeals, information requests, questions to elected representatives, petitions, public consultations, citizens' initiatives, and participatory budgeting programmes.





School Participatory Budgeting Toolkit

by Council of Europe within the framework of the Council of Europe project, "Promoting Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine", in co-operation with Oleksii Kovalenko, expert of the Council of Europe, leader of the "Kyiv Civic Platform" Association of NGOs (most recent edition: 2020)

<https://rm.coe.int/school-participatory-budgeting-toolkit-eng/1680a091db>



School participatory budgeting is a civil participation tool designed to involve schoolchildren and students in decision-making and allocation of funds in schools, while simultaneously developing a sense of active citizenship among young people. The toolkit puts significant emphasis on ensuring a high level of inclusion in school participatory budgeting, ensuring equal opportunities for boys and girls, and also outreach to socially disadvantaged schoolchildren. It also stresses the need for students to participate in the development of the rules for the school participatory budgeting scheme.

With the help of step-by-step methodological recommendations, the toolkit incorporates the following steps:

- Step 1.** Selecting the basic model and developing own model (selection criteria are included in the tool);
- Step 2.** Developing the regulation on school participatory budgeting and its parameters (a matrix and criteria are provided).

Guidelines are also provided on:

- allocation of funding for respectively small and large budget projects;
- how to raise awareness in schools about school participatory budgeting;
- proposal requirements, including submission requirements and collection of signatures of support;
- voting mechanisms, procedures for evaluating proposals, and supervision of the implementation of selected projects.

SPEAKERS, FACILITATORS, AND PRESENTERS

SPEAKERS AND HOSTS	
MARKUS ADELSBACH	Head, Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy, Council of Europe
CORNELIA PERLE	Senior Programme Adviser, Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy, Council of Europe
KETEVAN TSANAVA	Head, Open Government Partnership Secretariat, Administration of Government of Georgia
STEFAN SIRBU	Deputy Head, Council of Europe Office in Georgia
PELAGIA MAKHAURI	Project Officer, Council of Europe Office in Georgia, “Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia”
FACILITATORS AND PRESENTERS	
JEFF LOVITT	Chair, New Diplomacy, Czech Republic. Designed the Council of Europe’s Participatory Democracy Academy, which has been implemented in Ukraine since 2019. Author of two Council of Europe books on Civil Participation in Political Decision-Making in the Eastern Partnership countries.
DANIELE DEL BIANCO	Director, Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG), Italy. The Council of Europe’s Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit was authored by the Council of Europe’s Centre of Expertise for Good Governance in co-operation with ISIG.
RAMONA VELEA	Deputy Director, Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG), Italy. The Council of Europe’s Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit was authored by the Council of Europe’s Centre of Expertise for Good Governance in co-operation with ISIG.
NATALIA CHORNOGUB	Council of Europe expert, Ukraine, and Head of NGO “Park Natalka” in Kyiv. She has worked to bring together public authorities and citizens to foster greater citizen engagement in public space planning and revitalisation of public spaces in more than 30 cities throughout Ukraine.
VOLODYMYR KEBALO	Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, “Strengthening Civil Participation in Democratic Decision-Making in Ukraine”
OLESKII KOVALENKO	Council of Europe expert, Ukraine, head of NGO Civil Society Development Forum, Kyiv. Main author of Council of Europe’s Civic Lab Toolkit, UChange tool, and School Participatory Budgeting toolkit, and one of the initiators of All-Ukrainian Public Budget, a participatory tool supported by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine.
YULIA ZHERLITSYNA	Council of Europe expert, Ukraine, and expert of NGO Civil Society Development Forum, Kyiv.
PARTICIPANT PRESENTERS	
REVAZ BARBAKADZE	Chair of Board, Rustavi Innovations Hub, and adviser to Mayor of Rustavi, Georgia. Council of Europe expert and trainer on projects, Regional Academy on Participatory Democracy: Guria, and Regional Academy on Participatory Democracy: Imereti.
TARAS PROKOP	City Councillor, and adviser to Mayor, Chernivtsi City Council, Ukraine. Worked in 2021, with help of Council of Europe, on adoption of regulations on public consultations on public space planning in Chernivtsi. Previously, co-ordinator of the project Public Consultations in the Budget Process in Chernivtsi region.

PARTICIPANTS

ALBANIA	
AUREL BORIÇI	Municipality of Tirana/Director of Civil Emergencies/ Public Relations
KETI LUARASI	Municipality of Tirana/Deputy Mayor
GELDONA METAJ	Equality in Decision Making (EDM) - Tirana, Albania/Project Officer
ELENA GJERGJI	National Democratic Institute – Tirana, Albania, Senior Program Assistant
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	
SANDRA DOBRIJEVIĆ ŠIPKA	Public Institution "Social work Centre", Banja Luka/Research and Development Coordinator
MAHIR MEŠALIĆ	Representative of Cantonal Parliament Tuzla Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina (elected)/Member of Assembly Canton Tuzla, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
ALMA MIDŽIĆ	Institute for Development and European Integration, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina/Communication officer/Policy officer for the direct participation of citizens in decision making on project Ozone
ARMAN BEŠLIJA	Youth Council of Goražde, located in eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina/Officer for Youth Policy Development and Grant Management
GEORGIA	
NANA TAVDUMADZE	Ozurgeti Municipal Council, Guria Region/Head of The Municipal Council's Staff
GIORGI ORKODASHVILI	Caucasus Environmental Ngo Network - Cenn (Working in South Caucasus, With A Specific Focus on Rural Regions)/Project Manager
REVAZ BARBAKADZE	Rustavi Innovations Hub/Chairman of Board
DAREJAN MURADASHVILI	Civil Society Institute, Tbilisi (Gori And Batumi Branches)
KETEVAN ABAZASHVILI	International Association Civitas Georgica, Tbilisi, Georgia/Program Coordinator
TINATIN TSOTSKHALASHVILI	City Hall of Dusheti Municipality, Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region/Head Of Division For Communication And Information
SANDRO SORDIA	Zugdidi Municipality Council (Zugdidi, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region)/Elected Member of Municipality Council
NATIA APHKHAZAVA	Civil Society Institute (CSI) Batumi Branch, Batumi, Ajara

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	
VICTOR PRUTEANU	Parliament of The Republic of Moldova/Chief of Multimedia and Social Networks Section, Communication and Public Relations Directorate
DARIA STARAIA	Central Electoral Commission/Senior Advisor, Communication, Public Relations and Media Department
DANIELA GOLOGAN	Erim Equal Rights and Independent Media, Lyon Based/Grant Manager
DAN NICORICI	Junior Researcher / Project Assistant, CPR Moldova - Center For Policies and Reforms
UKRAINE	
NATALIIA KOPYCHYN	Boryslav Park Municipal Enterprise (Boryslav City Council) Boryslav, Lviv Region/Manager/Administrator of Tourism at Boryslav City Park
TARAS PROKOP	Chernivtsi City Council/Adviser to The Mayor, Deputy of The City Council
ANASTASIIA LANINA	Foundation "Mhp-Community" (Main Office - Cherkassy Region, Representatives In 19 Regions of Ukraine/Specialist in Social Projects
MARIIA GRYSHCENKO	Ngo Center For Urban Studies, Kyiv, Ukraine/Project Manager, Researcher



FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

"Various methodologies were introduced that looked very professional, but were also easy to use."

"Civil participation can be implemented in a plethora of institutions – from local authorities to NGOs. I had the opportunity to find out that other participants have successfully implemented it in their day-to-day activity."

"I will use the tool [on stakeholder identification] in my future activities." knowledge and skills."

"We learned "nine principles in participatory decision-making that should be included in any activity."

[from Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation – Conference of INGOs, Council of Europe, revised 2019]

"Civil Participation in Decision-Making, CivicLab, UChange toolkits are great!"

"I gained more experience, especially in the field of implementing new ideas in improving tools for future initiatives."

"New tools, new ideas, new friendships, and understanding of good practices in different countries."

"All the tools provided during the Winter School will be very helpful to adopt in my work, especially the Civil Participation in Decision-Making Toolkit – mapping stakeholders and how to conduct public meetings effectively."

"A lot of tools were introduced, and there is a need to understand some of them in more depth, but without a doubt I increased my knowledge and skills."

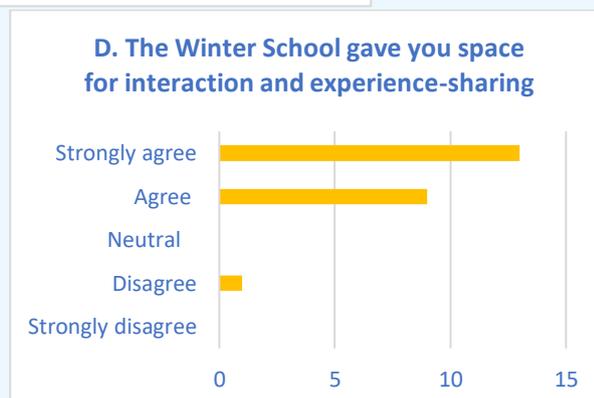
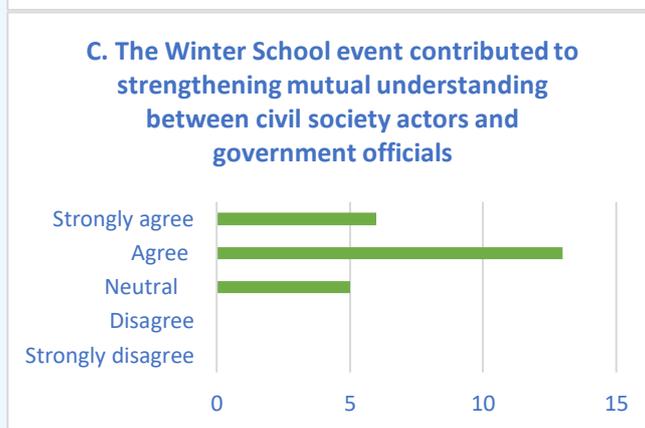
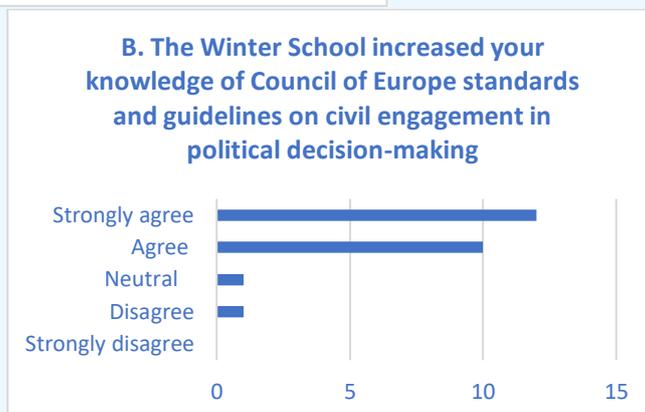
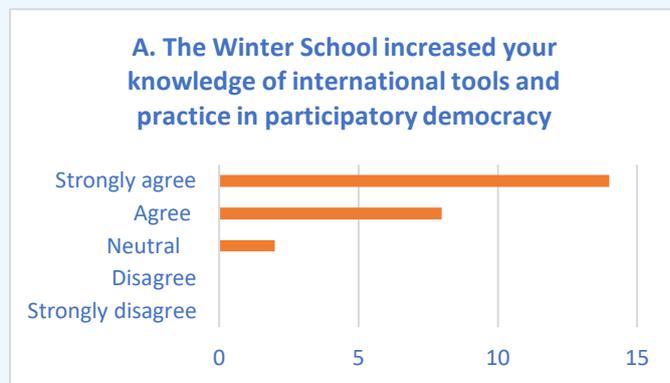
"We were introduced to multiple resources that we can use for our initiatives and to enhance civil participation in different levels."

"I will apply three of the tools introduced during the Winter School – to work with the city council and youth."

"The tools that were presented in the Winter School helped me to draft a plan that will encourage interaction between CSOs and institutions."

SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN WINTER SCHOOL, 10 DECEMBER 2021

Number of surveys returned: 24 (of 24 participants)



NEXT STEPS

After the first overview face-to-face training in Tbilisi, follow-up online sessions will be offered to the participants during February-March 2022 to deepen their knowledge of specific tools. The in-depth trainings will be tailor-made based on a training needs assessment that will be sent out together with this training documentation (see link to Survey Monkey in the e-mail).

Between 27-28 January, 5 online meetings will be held – one with each country delegation – to discuss the respective country participants' training needs and way forward.

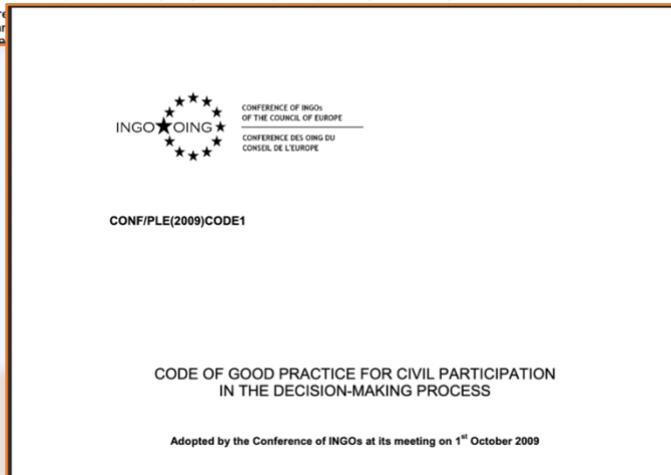
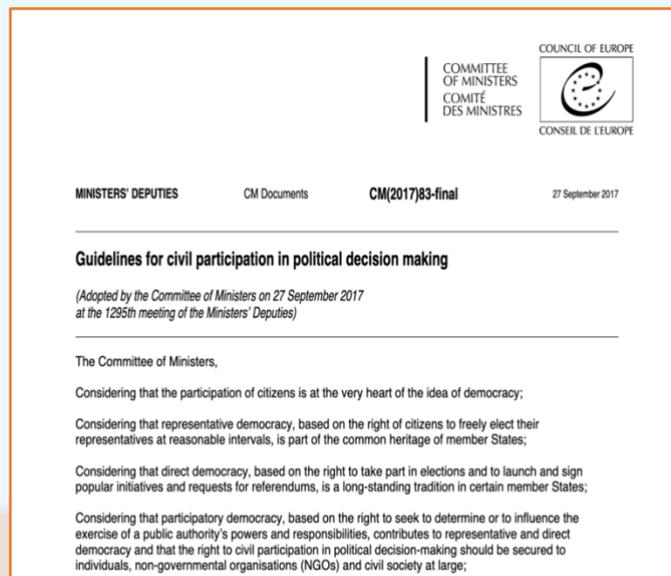
In April 2022, a final experience-sharing workshop will provide an opportunity to finalise the learning process. Participants will also receive a certificate upon completion.

After the successful conclusion of the training, there will also be opportunities for support and guidance in the implementation of civil participation tools learned during the event (depending on the specific proposals and availability of resources).



COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- **Guidelines for Civil Participation in Political Decision Making, Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2017):**
<https://rm.coe.int/16807626cf>
- **The Congress of the Council of Europe's Resolution and Recommendation on Transparency and Open Government, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (2018):**
<https://rm.coe.int/16808d341c>
- **The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, adopted by the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe (2009):**
<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802eed5c>
- **European Charter of Local Self-Government, Council of Europe (1985):**
<https://rm.coe.int/168007a088>
- **The Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority, Council of Europe (2009):**
<https://rm.coe.int/168008482a>
- **Committee of Ministers Recommendation on the participation of citizens in local public life, Council of Europe (2018):**
<https://rm.coe.int/090000168097e938>



ANNEXES

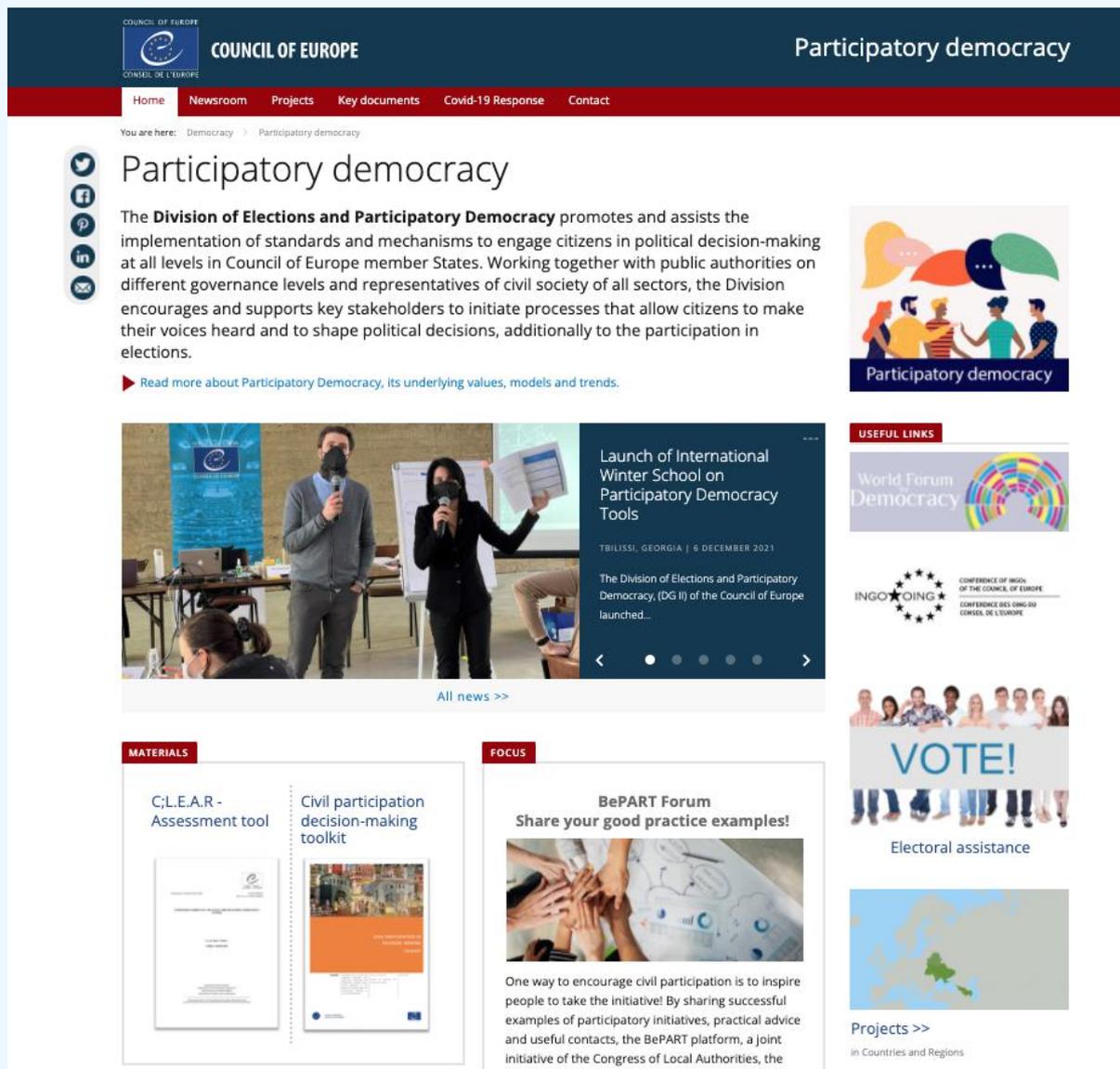
The following annexes are available in the following google folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h_khTsCbKvIIkCIQ2or5GT_dqXc6DyIt



- Full agenda, Council of Europe Winter School on Participatory Democracy Tools, 22 November 2021 (online), and 6-10 December, Tbilisi, Georgia
- Presentations at Winter School
- Tools presented at Winter School
- Winter School Action Plans generated by participants
- CivicLab Priorities and Visualisation – Participants’ Simulation
- Photographs from Winter School
- List of Participants





The screenshot shows the Council of Europe website page for Participatory Democracy. The header includes the Council of Europe logo and navigation links: Home, Newsroom, Projects, Key documents, Covid-19 Response, and Contact. The main content area features a title 'Participatory democracy' with social media icons (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube) on the left. The introductory text states: 'The **Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy** promotes and assists the implementation of standards and mechanisms to engage citizens in political decision-making at all levels in Council of Europe member States. Working together with public authorities on different governance levels and representatives of civil society of all sectors, the Division encourages and supports key stakeholders to initiate processes that allow citizens to make their voices heard and to shape political decisions, additionally to the participation in elections.' Below this is a link to 'Read more about Participatory Democracy, its underlying values, models and trends.' A featured news item titled 'Launch of International Winter School on Participatory Democracy Tools' is shown, dated 6 December 2021 in Tbilisi, Georgia. To the right, there are 'USEFUL LINKS' including 'World Forum Democracy' and 'INGO GOING'. Below the news item, there are 'MATERIALS' such as 'C;L.E.A.R.-Assessment tool' and 'Civil participation decision-making toolkit', and a 'FOCUS' section for 'BePART Forum' with the headline 'Share your good practice examples!'. On the far right, there are 'VOTE!' and 'Electoral assistance' sections, and a 'Projects >>' link with a map of Europe.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/participatory-democracy>

