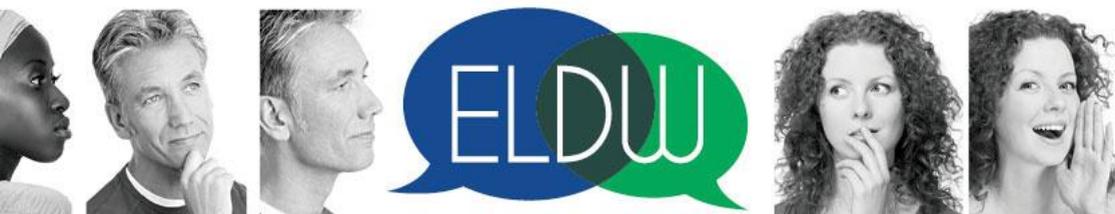


European
Local
Democracy
Week



ASSESSMENT OF THE 2020 EDITION

**ASSESSMENT OF THE 2020 EDITION
OF THE EUROPEAN LOCAL
DEMOCRACY WEEK**

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Andreas Kiefer,
Secretary General of the Congress



Dear ELDW partners,

The year of 2020 was a challenging year for societies, for governments, and for local and regional authorities. As the primary keepers of citizens' well-being in their communities, municipalities and regional authorities have found themselves at the front line in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. They have been providing emergency services and implementing measures to contain the spread of the disease, communicating with citizens and coordinating with other levels of governance and partners in all sectors of society, and supporting efforts to mitigate the impact of the epidemic.

Against this background, local and regional authorities and their associations worked hard in 2020 to remain active participants of the European Local Democracy Week, organising ELDW despite the difficult circumstances. The ELDW 2020 theme of building trust between citizens and authorities has taken on a special meaning during the pandemic. I can proudly say that, this year, a record-breaking number of activities were organised in Europe, even in the

conditions of lockdowns and other restrictions. The ELDW participants effectively used digital tools to hold ELDW events and reached potentially millions of citizens from various groups of society.

I would like to thank those of you who have been organising ELDW for many years, and especially this past year – to express the appreciation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities for your devoted work in your respective countries to make the European Local Democracy Week a true pan-European event. I also would like to express appreciation to Congress Spokespersons on the ELDW, Bryony Rudkin (UK) and Mihkel Juhkami (Estonia) for their commitment to providing political guidance to this initiative.

For more than a decade since 2007, the ELDW was organised every year in the week of 15 October, to mark the **opening for signature, on 15 October 1985, of the European Charter of Local Self-Government**. In October 2020, we celebrated the **35th anniversary** of this event, as well as **the 13th anniversary of the ELDW** initiative. It is a real pleasure to see that some of the ELDW participants organised dedicated events to celebrate the anniversary.

The Week is an occasion to remind us of core values, standards and principles contained in the Charter, to illustrate its practical implications at local and regional levels, and to celebrate the fact that the Charter is ratified by all 47 member States of the Council of Europe. So, I firmly believe that the ELDW can make a major contribution to the development local democracy, citizens'

involvement in democratic processes in their communities, and building trust between elected representatives and the citizens.

Regarding the 2020 Edition of the ELDW, let me congratulate the 204 local and regional authorities and their associations from 19 countries that celebrated the Week with us and reported on their activities. I look forward to welcoming them and many other old and new partners during the 2021 Edition.

Andreas Kiefer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas Kiefer'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'K'.

INTRODUCTION

The European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) is an annual pan-European initiative launched in 2007 with the aim of boosting citizen participation at grassroots level in Council of Europe member states and partner countries. It is coordinated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

To visualise the initiative's development, the evaluation report compares the past year's figures with those from previous editions of the ELDW.

This evaluation report, is based on the information received from the ELDW participants in 2020, including from the local and regional authorities and their associations which applied for the "Partner of the ELDW 2020" title that recognises excellence and creativity in organising ELDW activities in the past year.

The evaluation report comprises the summary of achievements and developments in 2020, the year when local and regional authorities actively participated the ELDW initiative for the 13th time.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has always been convinced that local and regional authorities play a key role in improving citizen participation, establishing trust between citizens and

their local elected representatives, and promoting inclusive communities.

The European Local Democracy Week initiative is closely linked with the Congress work for advancing local and regional democracy and citizens' involvement, and today the examples of best practices of citizen participation across Europe and in neighbouring countries are growing – despite the fact that in 2020, local activities had to be interrupted not only in Europe but around the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In cooperation with the Congress, the ELDW initiative has collected data and good practice examples of human rights implementation at local level, citizens' participation, promoting awareness among elected representatives of their responsibilities, as well as transparency, accountability, citizens' commitment, and cultural diversity. The figures and activities included in this evaluation report prove that even in the context of Covid-19, the ELDW participants continue to work hard for upholding democratic society and use all their resources to keep citizens' safe and involved.

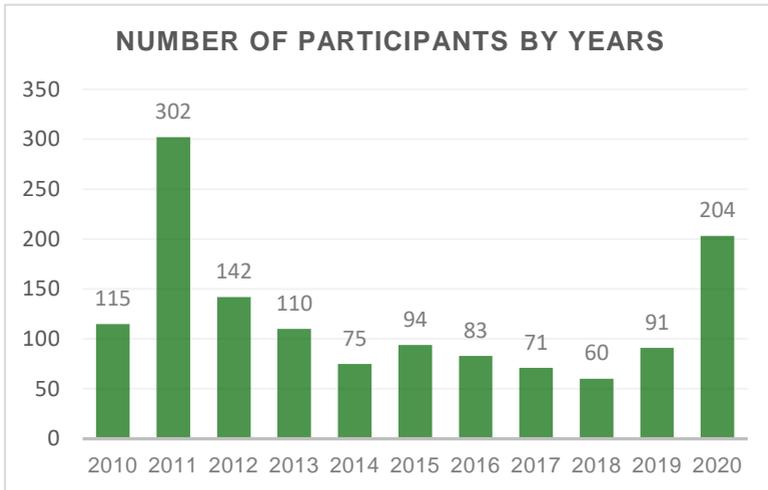
More information is available from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (www.coe.int/en/web/congress/) and its web pages on European Local Democracy Week (www.coe.int/demoweek).

FIGURES FOR 2020¹

In 2019, the European Local Democracy Week was officially held throughout. In 2020, the European Local Democracy Week was officially held throughout the year with the main event taking place in the week of 15 October even as the pandemic COVID-19 had affected the communities' lives. The COVID crisis has brought to the forefront the crucial importance of trust and citizens' confidence in public authorities and institutions of governance, especially in their communities, at the level closest to them. Against the background of restrictive measures, most of the activities were organised via online tools used for communicating with citizens under the theme of the 2020 Edition, "Local democracy: building trust".

Local and regional authorities, their national as well as European associations and networks (such as ALDA and Eurocities) have organised their events with the support of civil society organisations. The contribution of local stakeholders disseminating information and raising awareness of the 2020 theme through their networks increased the impact of the ELDW.

¹ Data based solely on the information registered and uploaded on the ELDW website.



➤ PARTICIPATION BY COUNTRIES

In the 2020 Edition, 204 participants from 19 countries took part in the ELDW initiative.

The ELDW only collects information given by the local and regional authorities and/or through their national associations which registered their participation on the ELDW's official website. Therefore, the actual number of municipalities that took part may be higher than the official number.

Out of the 204 the registered partners, eight were associations and 196 local or regional authorities which organised more than 325 registered events in 19 countries.

In 2020, local and regional authorities from the following five countries participated for the first time or resumed participation after a “pause” of several years: Azerbaijan, Latvia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, and North Macedonia. At the same time, five other countries that participated in the 2019 ELDW edition were not represented in 2020: Georgia, Greece, Italy, Republic of Moldova, and the United Kingdom.

The number of registered participants increased in several countries compared to 2019: Armenia (+17) Belgium (+4), Russia (+91), Serbia (+7) and Tunisia (+1). However, not all countries marked the same level of participation as in 2020. Unfortunately, the number of participants decreased in Romania (-3) and Turkey (-2).

The largest number of participating cities in 2020 was registered in Russia, with 121 local and regional authorities and their associations.

Comparison of participation per country (in alphabetical order)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Albania	5	1	1	3	-	-	4	2	1	1	1
Armenia	-	1	1	-	1	3	4	-	1	1	18
Austria	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Belgium	12	19	5	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

Bulgaria	1	-	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Croatia	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Estonia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finland	-	2	4	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
France	10	7	10	18	9	10	10	7	3	2	2
Georgia	1	5	-	3	1	2	-	1	1	1	-
Germany	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Greece	5	4	5	5	4	7	8	3	2	1	-
Hungary	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-
Iceland	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	24	7	10	10	6	3	3	1	3	1	-
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lithuania	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
Malta	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Republic of Moldova	-	6	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	1	-
Netherlands	1	3	3	5	1	1	-	1	1	-	1
North Macedonia	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Poland	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	-	-
Portugal	8	1	1	-	3	6	2	2	7	4	4
Romania	2	5	6	4	4	6	3	4	4	4	1

Russian Federation	11	15	39	5	4	8	7	6	-	30	121
Serbia	1	5	4	1	5	1	-	5	-	2	9
Slovak Republic	5	2	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	4	2	3	7	9	1	4	2	1	1	1
Sweden	-	2	6	4	3	4	2	2	2	2	2
Switzerland	2	2	1	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	-
Turkey	4	6	3	4	5	8	10	15	18	28	26
Ukraine	3	4	3	5	-	10	7	6	3	6	6
United Kingdom	11	17	14	11	6	6	7	7	6	3	-
Morocco	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tunisia	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	1	2
TOTAL	115	302	143	108	75	94	83	71	60	91	204

Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino and Slovenia have never participated in the ELDW initiative. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Lithuania, and Montenegro have participated only once, Latvia has participated for the first time in the 2020 edition.

Local and regions authorities from Belgium, France, Germany, Romania, Spain, and Turkey have been participating in the ELDW initiative for a long time.

In the future, the ELDW should reach the local and regional authorities who participated in the initiative between 2012 and 2015.

PARTNER OF THE ELDW

The annual title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week” was launched in 2019, in recognition of local and regional authorities and their associations which to have carried out the most effective activities during the Week. This title is granted by the Congress Bureau *a posteriori*, upon the actual participation and reporting of activities.

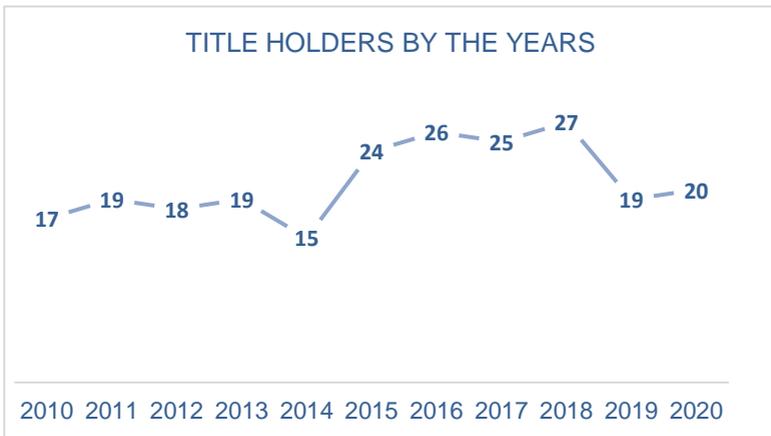
Local and regional authorities and their associations may request the title if they fulfil the eight established criteria:

1. Allocate a specific budget for citizens’ participation;
2. Run an ELDW promotion campaign using the ELDW visual identity decided on and provided by the Congress;
3. Carry out a number of specific activities linked to the year’s leading theme;
4. Organise an event with a European or pan-European dimension. A Congress representative may be invited in it;
5. Extend the social scope of the initiative by reaching out to groups that may feel excluded (children, women, Roma and Travellers, people with disabilities, etc.);
6. Promote the participation of young people and youth organisations;
7. Implement sustainable initiatives;
8. Implement innovative activities and projects.

After an assessment of compliance with the criteria, the “Partner of the ELDW” status was awarded to the following municipalities:

1. Municipality of AHMETBEY (Turkey)
2. Municipality of BEŞİKTAŞ (Turkey)
3. Municipality of BÜYÜKÇEKMECE (Turkey)
4. Municipality of BUCA (Turkey)
5. Municipality of CASCAIS (Portugal)
6. Municipality of ÇİĞLİ (Turkey)
7. Municipality of EDREMİT (Turkey)
8. City Council of FASTIV (Ukraine)
9. Municipality of KIRKLARELİ (Turkey)
10. Municipality of KONAK (Turkey)
11. City Council of KHARKIV (Ukraine)
12. Municipality of LÜLEBURGAZ (Turkey)
13. City Council of LVIV (Ukraine)
14. Municipality of MURATPAŞA (Turkey)
15. City of NIŠ (Serbia)
16. Municipality of RÂMNICU VÂLCEA (Romania)
17. Municipality of RİZE (Turkey)
18. Union of Central Anatolian Municipalities (Turkey)
19. Municipality of VALONGO (Portugal)
20. City of VRANJE (Serbia)

Before the “Partner of the ELDW”; “12 Stars City” status was launched in 2010 and applied until 2019. The title was a voluntary label for heavily involved cities and associations, that, on registering for the latest edition of ELDW, took on the five criteria. The table below shows the number of participants who contributed with more than a regular participant and received the either **12 Stars City** or **Partner of the EDLW**.



In the 2020 edition, twenty participants received “Partner of the EDLW” title, to give a special prominence to their participation in the local democracy week. In edition 2019, nineteen local and regional authorities have held the title and in the 2018 edition, twenty-seven participants revived the title.

MAIN THEME OF THE ELDW 2020 EDITION

Local Democracy: Building Trust.

Co-designing Local Democracy Together with Citizens and Practicing Open Government

In 2020, the world was confronted with a global pandemic outbreak that had a profound impact on people and institutions. The local and regional authorities have been at the forefront of the responses to contain the spread of the disease and mitigate the impact of the outbreak on their communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic crisis has brought to the forefront the crucial importance of trust and citizens' confidence in public authorities and institutions of governance, especially in their communities. The pandemic has compelled local and regional authorities to act in response to the crisis, communicating with citizens to engage their support for decisions taken.

The subnational level, being the closest to the population, plays a critical role in strengthening this trust through action by local and regional authorities in responding to citizens' concerns. This is why the theme of “**Local democracy: building trust**” was chosen for the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) 2019 and 2020, with the aim of emphasising the key role of local democracy in our European

countries and enabling citizens' trust in our democratic system to be restored. The theme, also, perfectly meets the measures that local and regional governments should take due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This biennial theme gives local authorities considerable leeway in selecting the activities to be undertaken. The underlying concept for this theme is **open government**, which is based on three pillars: participation, transparency and accountability.

Citizens' participation is the basis of democracy and good governance, two key principles of our society that the Council of Europe and the Congress stand for and defend. In order to achieve this, local authorities must support citizens' involvement in decision-making processes, for example by creating digital tools.

Transparency fosters better public governance since it enables the implementation of legal, fair and effective public action. The disclosure by local authorities of data and information on such areas as public expenditure, the award of public procurement contracts, policy development and impact, and the performance of the civil service is a means of preventing possible corrupt conduct by the administration and its officials.

Local governments must also demonstrate their **accountability** by means of rules, laws and mechanisms that ensure that government listens to citizens and meets their demands.

The practice of open government ensures better decision-making, greater public trust in institutions and more effective services, thus curbing abuses of power.

The main objective of the 2019-2020 theme has been to encourage local authorities to involve their citizens in local public life, and many partners involved have shown that local councillors know the benefits this can provide to their communities. The joint shaping of local democracy by citizens and their representatives ensures the viability of Europe's political and social fabric. The public authorities must listen and learn in order to devise better policies and improved services. Citizens' involvement in decision-making also gives legitimacy to the decisions taken by those authorities. Furthermore, that involvement provides a sense of belonging and of shared objectives and makes local communities places where people want to live and work, both now and in the future.

The Congress pays attention to participation and transparency. At its November 2018 and April 2019 sessions, it adopted a range of resolutions and recommendations on open government at the local level, directed both at national governments and at local and regional authorities. They dealt with transparency and open government, the European Code of Conduct for political integrity in local and regional governance, prevention of corruption and promotion of public ethics, public procurement, conflicts of interest, nepotism and the protection of whistle-blowers. These recommendations have now been published in the form of a compendium of texts on ethical governance.

THE ELDW IN PREVIOUS EDITIONS

YEARS	THEMES
2020-2019	Local democracy: building trust. Co-designing local democracy together with citizens and practicing open government
<p>With the aim of emphasising the key role of local democracy in our European countries and enabling citizens' trust in our democratic system to be restored, the theme "Local Democracy: Building Trust" was chosen for 2020 and 2019.</p>	
2018-2017	Citizen participation, consultation and commitment: for a thriving local democracy
<p>Increased legitimacy, improved accountability and more efficient delivery of public services are possible if local authorities see the benefits of getting citizens involved in decision-making processes. In this edition, citizens are invited to express their opinion on public issues through more direct platforms.</p>	
2016-2015	Living together in culturally diverse societies: respect, dialogue, interaction
<p>The goal of this theme was to highlight the importance of intercultural dialogue and peaceful living together and the objective was to reflect on the growing tendencies of radicalisation and violent extremism, and the threats these pose to our societies.</p>	
2014	Participatory democracy: sharing, proposing, deciding
<p>Given the current political and social context, coupled with the ubiquitous terrorist threats and the rise of populist movements grounded in xenophobia, hatred and social exclusion, this theme comes at a critical time in citizens' lives, the theme was chosen for 2014.</p>	
2013	Active citizenship: voting, sharing, participating
<p>The theme was at the heart of the ELDW mission: create a relevant tool to stimulate and promote citizen participation at local level.</p>	

2012	Human rights make for more inclusive communities
The theme was intended to encourage European local and regional authorities to promote awareness of the responsibilities that are incumbent for a democratic society.	
2011	Human rights - What about your backyard?
The growing threats in Europe to democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms made it more relevant and urgent to organise awareness-raising action at local level to promote and protect human rights.	
2010	The impact of sustainable communities in fighting climate change
The main idea was to highlight that local communities can play a major role in tackling crucial challenges related to climate change at local and regional level.	

ACTIVITIES

The 2020 Edition received a record-breaking number of registered activities which stood at 508 as at 31 December 2020. There is an increase of 240 reported activities compared to the 2019 edition, and an increase of 270 in comparison with 2018. This result could be considered as a positive effect of using digital tools and online systems.

The activities have been organised under three categories by the partners and the associations. These categories for the Partners are:

1. ELDW citizen participation activity
2. Activity referring to the leading theme: “Local Democracy: building trust. Co-designing local democracy together with citizens and practicing open government”
3. Communication campaign

For the associations, the categories are:

1. Activities encouraging their members to take part in the ELDW
2. Activities to promote the ELDW on the occasion of other association meetings or annual assembly meetings
3. Dissemination of information about the ELDW

Below is the table showing the number of activities organised by topics:

Year	PARTICIPANTS			ASSOCIATIONS		
	ELDW citizen participation activity	Activity referring to the leading theme	Communication campaign	Activities encouraging to take part in the ELDW	Activities to promote the ELDW	Dissemination activities
2020	264	77	25	13	1	128
2019	134	83	11	22	-	56
2018	15	13	2	8	1	-

The chart above shows that the associations should be motivated to promote the ELDW initiative and to organise dissemination activities. As the first step to address this need, an “ELDW in the Digital Age” Webinar was organised on 9 October 2020 in the KUDO system.

HIGHLIGHTS AND FLAGSHIP EVENTS

During the ELDW 2020 edition, local and regional authorities and their associations organised varied events and effectively used digital tools to reach their citizens from various groups of society.



The activities have been broad-based, and they enable municipalities to deal with various aspects: dialogue with citizens and increased involvement in decision-making, improved operation of local government and greater transparency in the process and, indeed, the development of new participatory mechanisms.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the activities have been centred on being accessible to citizens. The use of modern communication tools and new forms of citizen participation methods have been

complemented with the “classical” ways of citizen participation. This pandemic showed that using modern technologies for engaging citizens can be motivative.

Roskovec Municipality (Albania) organised an event called “Diversity for Local Development” to give a perspective and recognition of the importance of diversity to the local community. The aim of the activity was increasing citizens’ participation and building a common identity with pluralism and respect of human rights.

The Union of Communities of Armenia

is an umbrella organisation which represents all the municipalities in Armenia. All the ELDW activities have been registered under the Association’s



profile, and the activities are organised in co-operation with 17 municipalities. The association organised a capacity building webinar with the member of the Council of Elders in co-operation with **Yerevan Municipality** to discuss local issues and amalgamation problems. The involvement of the youth in community life; local self-government system and raising community’s awareness were among the discussed subjects. As part of raising citizens’ awareness, capacity building activities for young activists in **Vayots Dzor Marz Municipality** have been organised, aimed at strengthening young

civic activists' engagement with local self-government and decision-making processes at the local level. As part of dissemination activities about the ELDW, the association organised various contests in several cities such as "My City from My Window Photo Contest", in co-operation with **Abovyan Municipality**. The aim of this activity was not only to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, but also citizens' participation in local life, as well as active citizenship.

In Belgium, numerous municipalities implemented new and interactive methods of citizen participation. **Jette Municipality** decided to carry out an awareness-raising activity called "Do You Know Children's Rights?" and organised a large drawing exhibition. A field visit and a presentation of the municipal administration were organised by **Ixelles Municipality** to improve citizens' understanding of the municipality's work. In the same vein, **Etterbeek Municipality** created a council of foreign residents as part of its action for promoting inclusive communities and integrating underrepresented social groups. The aim of this council is to provide a "melting pot" by bringing together foreign residents for debate and proposals.

Chemnitz Municipality (Germany) has been a partner of the ELDW for several years. To improve citizen participation, "Guidelines for Good Participation" were prepared in 2020 with the voluntary contribution of citizens, and the roadmap of this guidelines was designed with a question: "How public participation will be implemented in the future?"

In the framework of twinning projects, representatives of **Ikskile Municipality** (Latvia) participated in the “Youth Democracy Forum” organised in October 2020 by their sister **Haapsalu Municipality (Estonia)** as part of the ELDW. This is an example of the potential of the ELDW for promoting cross-border co-operation and providing a meeting platform for local and regional authorities from different countries in Europe.

To improve citizen participation through local consultation and decision-making processes, **Dudelange Municipality (Luxembourg)** launched a citizens' forum (Biergerrot) for citizens' involvement in municipal services (mobility, family, cleanliness and civics).

The many partners of the ELDW 2020 fully complied with the biennial theme, “Local democracy: building trust”, in the organisation of their activities. For example, **Shuto Orizari Municipality's Local Youth Council (North Macedonia)** organised question-and-answer sessions with the Mayor's participation. Under this activity, young residents of the municipality had the opportunity to discuss topical issues with the Mayor and were informed about the functioning of the local self-government.

Valongo Municipality (Portugal) has introduced numerous activities for young people, notably through the creation of a participatory youth budget. This initiative shows young people that the local authority has a genuine desire to meet their needs. The municipality also hosted



an online international conference called “Paths to Follow” which brought together local and regional elected representatives from all over the world, including Congress Thematic Spokesperson on the ELDW Bryony Rudkin (UK). Another activity from Portugal called “Together we build democracy” was held in **Municipality of Cascais**. The aim of this activity was to raise awareness of local residents about the right to vote.

National Russian Congress of Municipalities is the main organiser of the European Local Democracy Week and the event co-ordinator on the territory of the **Russian Federation**. More than 650 activities were reported as having been organised under the umbrella of this association, with local and regional authorities joining the ELDW initiative. To give an example, a “Postcard for grandparents” initiative was launched by **Finlyandsky Municipal District of St Petersburg** aimed at integrating elderly people in the society. **Finlyandsky**



Municipal District also decided to focus its activities on transparency, which is a key factor in maintaining trust between citizens and local councillors. Due to Covid-19 Pandemic, the draft budget of St. Petersburg for 2021 was prepared with online meeting tools. To improve citizen participation through local consultation and decision-making processes, high school students were invited for a meeting in **Komarovsky district, Orenburg region** about local self-government and the work of the deputies. To encourage greater youth involvement, a business game was held with representatives of youth self-government structures, in co-operation with the **City Administration of Krasnodar**.

The **municipality of Södermöre (Sweden)** has focused its activities on digital dialogue with citizens. Young citizens of the city were the special target group. An online panel discussion was organised, during which local politicians answered questions from young people regarding “free-of-charge” public transportation service in the city, more varied school meals and better lighting in the school yard. The report of this meeting was published on the website.



In Serbia, **Kraljevo City** organised an online ELDW event by using digital tools in order to increase youth participation. **Veliko Gradiste Municipality** launched an awareness-raising campaign for active citizens' participation. Under this activity, citizens were involved in the Municipality's budget preparation process through social media networks.



Some ELDW activities were specifically aimed at the integration of refugees and under-represented groups, as well as the involvement of lower-profile sections of society in decision-making processes. In Turkey,

Ahmetbey Municipality organised events involving such groups as women, children, youth and disabled citizens. The 35th anniversary of the opening for signature of the European Charter of Local Self-Government was also celebrated in the city. In order to ensure broad citizen participation, **Keçiören Municipality** organised an online meeting with the Mayor and the youth representing both Turkish and international students. In **Lüleburgaz Municipality**, activities have organised in co-operation with the “Women’s Drum and Rhythm Group”, as a good example of engaging stakeholders in local level. **Rize Municipality** has also adapted their activities to Covid-19

pandemic and created a communication campaign by using online tools.

Kharkiv City Council (Ukraine) launched an activity called “Youth & Human Rights: From Abstract to Daily Practice”. The campaign aims to raise awareness among pupils and to fight against legal nihilism. To promote European identity and cross-cultural dialogue, **the Executive Committee of Fastiv City Council (Ukraine)** organised a quest game "Journey through Europe" as part of the Mayor's Cup competition.

➤ THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

The annual coordination meeting of the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) was held on 25 February 2020 in Strasbourg, France. Chaired by Thematic Spokesperson on the ELDW Bryony Rudkin (UK), the meeting brought together around 45 local elected representatives and municipal officials from five European countries (Armenia, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine). The participants evaluated the 2019 edition, shared their best practices in participatory democracy and discussed new perspectives for the 2020 edition on the theme of “Local Democracy – Building Trust”. They also held initial exchanges in view of the future theme of the ELDW for 2021-2022.

On this occasion, the title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week 2019” was awarded to 19 municipalities of four countries that have committed themselves to go further in the promotion of local democracy. The awarded municipalities have implemented initiatives such as participatory budgets, youth councils, sign language courses to facilitate inclusion in the city, debates on citizen participation, training on sustainable entrepreneurship and theatre workshops. At the end of the ceremony, Bryony Rudkin presented the certificates to the partners in recognition of their commitment to the ELDW.

➤ THE COORDINATION WEBINAR OF THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

On 9 October 2020, a Webinar on the theme “ELDW in the Digital Age” brought together National Coordinators of the ELDW, Congress Thematic Spokesperson on the ELDW Bryony Rudkin and Acting Secretary General of the Congress Andreas Kiefer, as well as representatives of municipalities and associations to showcase their best practices in organising ELDW activities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Representatives of the Moroccan and Tunisian associations of local and regional authorities also took part in the webinar.

The meeting provided an opportunity to highlight the objectives of the ELDW, in order to increase dialogue between local authorities and citizens. Discussions during the webinar focused on the pandemic, use of modern technologies and the need of strengthening citizens’ trust in local and regional authorities.

The Congress Hub of partners’ action in response to Covid-19 and the ELDW news and toolbox were also presented at the webinar by the Congress secretariat, followed by presentations of best practices in 2020 from Valongo Municipality, the Union of Communities of Armenia, Beşiktaş Municipality and the National Association of City Municipalities of Azerbaijan.

WEBSITE, NETWORK AND TOOLBOX

As in previous years, the website (<http://www.congress-eldw.eu/en/>) will continue to provide key information on the Week as well as tools for implementation of activities (logos, thematic ideas, reference texts). At the same time, in connection with the reform of the ELDW, the website has undergone a complete overhaul. However, although it has been modernised and graphically improved, it has retained its existing structure:

The main homepage describes the initiative and recent developments, through regular newsletters and Congress news items relating to the ELDW. It also contains all necessary information for registration and the procedures for participation.

The “initiative by countries” section includes all organised activities since 2010 and illustrates the best practices and new ideas. The interactive map increases the visibility of the local and regional authorities participating in the ELDW.

A third platform, the discussion forum, was added in 2019 in response to requests from participants who wished to be able to communicate with one another. The purpose of this tool is to create a genuine interactive online exchange space in order to develop synergies between ELDW participants. Every registered participant can start a

discussion and share activities or ideas, as well as ask for advice or even invite other participants to attend events. The ELDW participants are encouraged to actively share information, advice and good practices.

The restricted access "Partner Status" has been created to request "Partner of the ELDW" title automatically upon submission. Our partners can directly upload and update their profile for requesting the title.

➤ TOOLBOX

The ELDW video-clips, leaflets and related documents are existed on the ELDW webpage, under the "Toolbox" section. Besides, under the "ELDW Editions" section on the webpage, the information about the current edition and the previous editions and the evaluation reports can be found.

The European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) is a pan-European initiative aimed at boosting local democracy and citizen participation. It is co-ordinated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which is a political assembly composed of local and regional elected representatives from the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe.

Local and regional authorities from the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe are invited to organise public events, with the aim of increasing citizens' participation in decision-making at local level, developing the dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives (mayors, members of the municipal councils, etc.) and introducing participatory mechanisms into our democratic system.



More information

 democracy.week@coe.int

 www.coe.int/demoweeek

EN

www.coe.int/congress



The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states including members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an organ of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states. It is composed of 648 elected representatives representing more than 150,000 local and regional authorities.