EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK 2012

HUMAN RIGHTS
MAKE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

WHY DOES THE CONGRESS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE SUPPORT THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK?

Citizen involvement in local affairs and the accountability of local elected officials are essential for the vitality of local democracy throughout Europe.

For these reasons the Congress launched the European Local Democracy Week, an annual event with the aim:

- to raise the attention of European citizens on local democracy, to improve their acknowledgment and increase their involvement in local politics;
- to encourage local elected representatives to enhance the dialogue with their citizens to invigorate local public life;
- to raise European citizens awareness about the role of the Council of Europe and of the Congress in particular, in boosting local democracy and respect of human rights across Europe.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY
THE EUROPEAN WEEK OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY 2012 WILL CONTRIBUTE TO:

- promoting engagement in public life, especially for youth and less-represented groups;
- strengthening intergenerational co-operation and solidarity;
- defending the most vulnerable groups;
- fostering social rights and access to public quality services;
- thus, promoting more inclusive communities.

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European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) is an initiative of the Council of Europe and its Congress, launched in October 2007. The week of the 15th of October has been chosen for holding this event as a tribute to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, opened for signature on that date in 1985. The Congress, as a political assembly composed of elected officials from local and regional authorities of the 47 Council of Europe member states, is the body in charge of the co-ordination of this pan-European initiative.
HOW TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK?

The Congress invites local and regional authorities in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, as well as their national associations, to take initiatives and organise events during the European Local Democracy Week (15-21 October 2012).

Local authorities may organise events on issues of particular interest to them; however, the Congress recommends that at least one of the activities should focus on the leading theme of the ELDW 2012 “Human rights make for more inclusive communities”.

On the Congress website local authorities can find useful information, as well as a tool-kit to guide them in their preparations for the ELDW. This includes:

- a new registration form with instructions for choosing the level of their participation and to create their own web page posting their ELDW events programmes, pictures and documents;
- a description of various fields of interest and suggested thematic ideas;
- the list of national ELDW correspondents who will facilitate the participation of local authorities in the Week;
- information materials for the ELDW (logo, posters and leaflets), which can be easily downloaded and printed;
- the main reference texts and Congress documents concerning the safeguarding of human rights at local and regional level.

All the information about ELDW on: [www.coe.int/demoweek](http://www.coe.int/demoweek)

THE “12 STAR CITY”: A SPECIAL LABEL FOR A COMMITTED COMMUNITY

Local authorities participating in ELDW become “Partners of the Week”. Those who wish to give special prominence to their participation may get the opportunity to take part as a “12 Star City”. To take part in the ELDW as a “12 Star City”, local authorities have to fulfil five conditions:

1. Devote a specific budget to the ELDW activities.
2. Launch a promotion campaign using the graphic visuals provided by the Council of Europe Congress.
3. Organise a number of specific activities linked to the leading theme of “Human rights make for more inclusive communities”.
4. Involve different groups of citizens in the initiatives, in particular young people, through municipal youth councils, schools and colleges.
5. Organise an event with a European or pan-European dimension, to highlight the role of local authorities in building a democratic Europe.

More information about the “12 Star Cities” can be found at [www.coe.int/demoweek/12 stars](http://www.coe.int/demoweek/12 stars)

WHY HAVE “HUMAN RIGHTS MAKE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES” AS THE LEADING THEME OF THE 2012 EDITION OF THE WEEK?

The success of the 2011 edition of the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) focused on “Human rights at local level” demonstrated that local authorities are keen to develop human rights concepts with their citizens.

Furthermore, the ELDW 2011 showed that awareness-raising activities on human rights at the grassroots contribute to boost social inclusion and solidarity in local communities.

Through the ELDW 2012, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities wishes to highlight, once more, human rights as a key element of local and regional democracy.

The Congress, as the largest assembly of local and regional elected representatives in Europe, aims at strengthening the respect for human rights and local democracy throughout the cities and regions of Europe.

FROM 15 TO 21 OCTOBER 2012 CITIES AND TOWNS OF THE 47 MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK!