

DRAFT PROGRAMME

(as of 25 November 2013)

“Residence-based participation: a new reality of modern democracy”

Joint conference between the Congress and the City of Strasbourg

Strasbourg, 27 November 2013, La Grande Aubette
Interpretation English/French/Arabic

09.00 OPENING SESSION

Opening statements

- Mr **Roland RIES**, Mayor of Strasbourg
- Mr **Herwig VAN STAA**, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe

09.15 WORKSHOP I: “CITIZENSHIP AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE DETERMINED BY RESIDENCE: A NEW MODEL OF PARTICIPATION”

Moderator and keynote address: Mr **Vincent REBERIOUX**, Vice-President of the Human Rights League, Coordinator of the project “Citizenship Vocation”

Speakers:

- Mr **Henrik HAMMAR**, Chairman of the Örkelljunga Municipal Council (Sweden) and Congress Rapporteur on the integration of migrants through self-employment
- Mr **Ben FAYOT**, former member of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies and former local councilor of the City of Luxembourg
- Ms **Lilja GRETARDOTTIR**, Migration Co-ordination Division, Council of Europe, former member of the Icelandic Parliament
- Ms **Ulla KALBFLEISCH-KOTTSIEPER**, Special Expert to the Ministry of Justice, Thüringen (Germany)
- Mr **Alphonse GOUETH**, President-Delegate of the French Council of Residence-based Citizenship (CoFraCiR)

Discussion: *What practical participation mechanisms at local level should be created to reflect the shift from citizenship-based to residence-based participation? What are the new perspectives of the participation of migrants and foreign residents in the framework of the participatory democratic model?*

Conclusions of the workshop: Mr **Vincent REBERIOUX**

11.00 COFFEE BREAK

11.15 WORKSHOP II: “PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN AN INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY: CONTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN RESIDENTS TO COMMUNITY BUILDING”

Moderator: Mr **Steven CLIFT**, Executive Director, E-Democracy.org

Keynote address: Mr **Jean-Claude FRÉCON**, Member of the Municipal Council of Pouilly-lès-Feurs (France), Member of the French Senate and President of the Congress Chamber of Local Authorities

Speakers:

- Ms **Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI**, Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg (France) and Congress Rapporteur on changing perceptions of cultural diversity
- Ms **Katarina VUKOBRATOVIC**, Program Coordinator, Maytree Foundation
- Dr **Allal AMRAOUI**, First Deputy Mayor of Fes (Morocco), partner city of Strasbourg
- Mr **Anastasios KATSIANIS**, Deputy Mayor of Trikala (Greece), municipality member of the *Club de Strasbourg*

Discussion: *What is the role and place of migrants and foreign residents in the local community today, against the background of growing cultural diversity? How do they contribute to community building, and what intercultural policies and action should be pursued at local level to engage them better?*

Conclusions of the workshop: Mr **Steven CLIFT**

13.00 END OF THE CONFERENCE

Objective

The conference will discuss new perspectives on citizen participation at local level in the framework of the participatory democratic model, necessitated by the shift from citizenship-based to residence-based participation and by the growing diversity of European societies.

The objective is to identify appropriate methods and forms encouraging and enabling the engagement of all residents, regardless of their origin and legal status, in community building.

Discussions will focus in particular on the role and place of migrants and foreign residents in the local community, their contribution to community building, their political participation through representative structures such as councils of foreign residents and through their right to vote in local elections, as well as on intercultural policies and action at local level to engage migrants.

Discussion points:

WORKSHOP 1: “CITIZENSHIP AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE DETERMINED BY RESIDENCE: A NEW MODEL OF PARTICIPATION”

The question of foreigners' voting rights is a well-worn subject of debate in European politics but it has now taken centre stage, as cultural diversity has become an increasingly key issue in society, amounting to one of democracy's main challenges.

If the quality of democracy depends primarily on the trust that citizens place in their institutions and on their participation in the democratic process, then no integration policy can be said to have succeeded unless migrants and minorities are involved in local life. This is, moreover, the idea that the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level tries to promote, in particular through local and regional councils of foreign residents and through the right to vote in local elections.

The aim will be to investigate the link between citizenship and nationality and, more specifically, whether they are each determined entirely separately or whether other factors may figure in their realisation, thus facilitating the transition from citizenship-based to residence-based participation.

The subject also invites us to take a position on the process of integration and the idea of strengthening the European social pact by granting non-EU nationals the right to vote in local elections. Is this a decisive factor in the attempt to tackle the deficit of local democracy and social cohesion?

The local authorities have a major role to play in integrating migrants into the community as they are in the best position to take positive action to promote the process of participatory democracy. It is vital therefore that they change their way of functioning so as to encourage more citizens to get involved and to ensure that they can participate more in the decision-making process.

WORKSHOP 2: “PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN AN INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY: CONTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN RESIDENTS TO COMMUNITY BUILDING”

Against a background of democratic deficit, economic crisis and the growing diversity of European societies, the survival of an intercultural society depends on the development of a new form of democracy, which is not restricted to voting but based on residence and intercultural exchange. Much more than this, we should be building a system based on citizens' capacity to express themselves and discuss the future of the local community.

The current challenge seems to be to link up all the aspects of democracy in a coherent manner. There is a need to guarantee greater respect for human rights through broader participation by local stakeholders while promoting education in intercultural dialogue and setting up effective inclusive policies to integrate people and restore the social fabric.

The concept of participatory democracy also raises the question of the effective participation of foreign residents in the development of the community and the place they occupy within it.

Society must interact with newcomers and gear its institutions to their needs to avoid inflaming social conflicts, which are a potential threat to local cohesion. Municipalities are the main protagonists in this process, with the potential to create an environment that is conducive to citizen participation and involvement.

Accordingly, one of the major foundation stones of participatory democracy is consistent local policies and innovative methods which make it possible to engage in a new form of active citizenship.

Our aim should be to look at how participatory democracy can be stimulated and rendered effective and how foreign residents can be more fully and successfully involved in the community's life projects.