





Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy

« Electoral systems »

Kyiv, Ukraine, from 21 to 23 October 2009

Background information

The Forum for the Future of Democracy

The Forum for the Future of Democracy was established in May 2005 at the Warsaw Summit of the Council of Europe, with a view to strengthening democracy, political freedoms and citizens' participation. The annual meetings of the Forum are open to all member States and civil society, represented by policymakers, officials, practitioners or academics. The Forum for the Future of Democracy shall enable the exchange of ideas, information and examples of best practices, with a view to enhancing, through its reflection and proposals, the Council of Europe's work in the field of democracy.

The launch meeting of the Forum for the Future of Democracy was held in Warsaw in 2005 and dealt with Civic Participation. The 2006 session of the Forum was held in Moscow, focusing on the Role of Political Parties in the Building of Democracy. The 2007 session of the Forum was held in Stockholm and Sigtuna (Sweden) with the theme "Power and empowerment – the interdependence of democracy and human rights". The last Forum session took place in Madrid in 2008 and dealt with "e-democracy". Further information about these four Forum sessions can be found on www.coe.int/democracy.

Themes, programme and working methods

The 2009 session of the Forum will be held in Kyiv from 21 to 23 October 2009. The main theme will be "electoral systems".

Three parallel workshops will deal with the following specific themes:

Workshop 1: Elections at the national level

Workshop 2: Elections and local democracy

Workshop 3: Media and NGOs in times of elections

In order to ensure coherence between workshops, foster a forward-looking and resultsoriented approach and to be able to structure the conclusions by the General Rapporteurs, there will be a horizontal interlinkage between the workshop sessions, facilitated by a number of cross-cutting themes which will be addressed by each workshop from a different perspective.

The following cross-cutting themes have been identified:

1. Reducing the disenfranchisement of voters

(e.g. minorities, foreigners, disadvantaged groups);

2. Candidate and party identity

(positions, platforms, campaigns, role of the media, getting the message across);

3. New technologies

(at the time of voting, but also information and campaigning, mass media);

4. Gender

(e.g. party lists, media coverage);

5. The role of electoral commissions;

6. Domestic observers

(parties, NGOs and their rights and responsibilities).

Workshop sessions will allow for interactive discussion by different discussion formats and different dynamics.

The draft preliminary programme is as follows:

Wednesday 21 October - DAY ONE

2 p.m. – **4 p.m.** Registration of participants

4 p.m. Opening of the Forum for the Future of Democracy 2009

Welcome by high-level representatives of the Ukrainian authorities

Opening Speeches:

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Chairman of the Committee of Ministers

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

President of the Venice Commission

Presentation of the Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the decision-making process elaborated by the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe.

Coffee Break

5.30 p.m. First Plenary Session

Keynote speaker

Panel debate on "The Future of Elections"

7 p.m. Close of the First Plenary Session

8 p.m. Welcome reception (tbc)

Thursday 22 October - DAY TWO

9.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon / 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Three parallel workshops¹

Workshop title	Elections at the national level	Elections and local democracy	Media and NGOs in times of elections
morning session theme			
afternoon session theme			
working languages			

¹ Cross-cutting themes which could be addressed by each workshop from a different perspective may include:

- I. Reducing the disenfranchisement of voters (e.g. minorities, foreigners, disadvantaged groups);
- II. Candidate and party identity (positions, platforms, campaigns, role of the media, getting the message across):
- III. New technologies (at the time of voting, but also information and campaigning, mass media);
- IV. Gender (e.g. party lists, media coverage);
- V. The role of electoral commissions;
- VI. Domestic observers (political parties, NGOs and their rights and responsibilities).

Friday 23 October - DAY THREE

10 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. Concluding Plenary Session

Contribution by the President of the Council of Europe Conference of INGOs

Reports from workshops by the workshop rapporteurs:

Rapporteur of Workshop 1 : Mr Yuriy Kluchkovskyi Rapporteur of Workshop 2 : Mr Hendrik Daems Rapporteur of Workshop 3 : Mr Jean-Claude Frécon

Panel: Results and conclusions of the Forum for the Future of Democracy 2009

General Rapporteur appointed by the host country

General Rapporteur appointed by PACE

General Rapporteur appointed by the Congress

Coffee break

Presentation of the Forum conclusions

Closing of the 2009 Session and invitation to the 2010 Session

..., Ukraine

..., Council of Europe

..., Armenia (host country of FFD 2010)

Selection of NGO representatives

The Council of Europe and the host country attach great importance to having civil society appropriately represented at the 2009 session of the Forum for the Future of Democracy.

The Conference of International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe has been asked to bring the Forum session to the attention of civil society representatives across Europe and to carry out the selection of approximately 50 NGO participants for whom the Council of Europe will cover the travel and subsistence expenses.

Only NGO representatives who have been selected by the Conference of INGOs will have access to the 2009 session of the Forum for the Future of Democracy.

The Conference of INGOs will apply the following criteria for the selection of the NGO representatives:

- civil society shall be represented by national NGOs from as many Member States as possible and by a number of selected international NGOs, think tanks or foundations;

- selected NGOs should be competent and need to have concrete experience in the areas covered by the Forum session (please refer to the above section on themes, programme and working methods);
- a broad array of NGOs is expected to be selected such as service providers, advocacy groups, associations of local and regional authorities, think tanks, youth NGOs etc. The selection process will aim to achieve a balanced representation of women and men at the Forum session;
- English, French and Ukrainian are the working languages of the Forum session and proficiency in at least one of the languages is required.

The Council of Europe will cover the following costs for selected NGO participants²:

- Travel expenses
- Hotel accommodation
- NGO participants will also be entitled to a small contribution towards other expenses connected to travel and stay in Kyiv. Some luncheons and dinners will be offered by the Forum hosts. Reimbursement of expenses will be done by bank transfer **after** the meeting.

Interested NGOs are requested to return their application form by e-mail <u>no later than</u> <u>Monday 15 June 2009 to catherine.emezie@coe.int</u> (<u>application form</u>). The selected NGOs will be informed by 1st week of September 2009.

Contact at the Council of Europe:

Should you require further information, you may contact Mr Mehdi Remili (email: mehdi.remili@coe.int) or Mrs Catherine Emezie (email: catherine.emezie@coe.int), Division of NGOs and Civil Society, Directorate of Democratic Institutions, Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs of the Council of Europe.

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² The Council of Europe will cover the costs for a limited number of NGOs