



DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER DIRECTRACY

A Message from Senator Mike Gravel to the Occupy Wall Street Movement

YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAND UP. NOW
HAVE THE GOOD SENSE TO EMPOWER
YOURSELVES!

THERE ARE ONLY TWO PLACES WHERE
OCCUPY WALL STREET (OWS) CAN CHANGE
THINGS AND LEGALLY REALIZE ITS GOALS

THE GOVERNMENT – Which can make changes but won't, regardless how hard you protest, because the wealthy corporate elites control our representative government and change threatens their interests.

OR

THE PEOPLE – Who want to change things but can't because the Constitutional Framers in 1787 failed to provide the people with procedures to change the Constitution and to make laws, even though the Founders repeatedly declared that future generations should be able to alter their Constitution to meet their needs.

THE RESULT – All the people can do, under our present structure of representative government, is give their power away on Election Day and then for the next two, four or six years write their local government officials, the Congress and the President pleading with them to address the public interest. When that doesn't work, which is generally the case, all the people can do is protest and suffer the evermore repressive force of the police.

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT THE SOLUTION – When people protest, they are essentially begging their political leaders who are controlled by corporate elites to address the public interest. Regardless how much they protest, those who control government will do no more than what they are already doing. Government leaders will never choose to empower the people because it dilutes their own power.

THE PEOPLE ARE THE SOLUTION – The Founders repeatedly declared that the people are the sovereigns of the polity with the power to alter their constitutions to meet the needs of future generations. Therefore, citizens' movements need to stop begging government officials and turn the energy and resources of their protest movements into an actionable electoral

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Prag, Masaryk Democratic Academy
and WDDM

29.-30. October 2011



*From the left, behind: Eng.Zdenek Trinkewitz; in front, second Ms Annie Machon, Ero Liivik; behind: Mgr.Milus Kotišová, Dr.Jiri Polak
From the right: behind:Mgr.Lukáš Kantor; in front, third: Senator Mike Gravel, Dr.Martin Brabec, Dr.Marek Hrubec*

Saturday, Oct.29

Program (languages used: English and Czech):

Introduction – Ph.D.Marek Hrubec, vice-chairman of Masaryk Democratic Academy, director of the Center of Global Studies, Academy of Sciences Ph.D.Jiri Polak, WDDM, DD EV Ph.D.Martin Brabec, director of the Prag branch office of the MDA

Session 1: Direct Democracy Development

Chair: Senator Mike Gravel, USA

Mike Gravel – Introduction to the Theme

Zdenek Trinkewitz – Financing of Political Parties and Regulation of Election Campaigns

Lunch Break

campaign to enact meta legislation that will empower them to actually make laws – lawmaking is the central power of government – and thereby enact the agendas they are protesting for into laws.

HOW DO WE DO THIS???

WHAT IS META-LEGISLATION? - It is a fundamental law to empower people with the authority and procedures to properly implement their sovereign power to make laws.

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS INITIATIVE FOR DEMOCRACY (NCI4D) is meta-legislation. It does not address any issue other than empowerment. It defines the authority and provides the procedures that empower citizens to be able to address issues legislatively like their elected representative legislators. The NCI4D is a legislative package that contains two proposed laws: a Citizens Amendment to the Constitution that confirms the authority empowering citizens as lawmakers; and a federal statute, the Citizens Legislative Procedures Act, that provides procedures for citizens to deliberately enact laws in every government jurisdiction of the United States and creates an agency, the Citizens Trust, to administer those procedures on behalf of the people. When enacted directly by the people in a national election, the National Citizens Initiative for Democracy will complete the unfinished work of the Constitutional Framers who failed to provide procedures in the Constitution to permit citizens to change and improve their government without recourse to violence.

HOW DO CITIZENS ENACT THE NATIONAL CITIZENS INITIATIVE FOR DEMOCRACY INTO LAW? - By having Philadelphia II, a nonprofit corporation, conduct a national

election – since the government would not conduct such an election – using modern communication technology to ask voters if they want to be empowered to make laws like their elected representatives and in a manner similar to the initiative lawmaking process that exists in 24 American states (but considerably improved). If the voters respond with an affirmative vote equal to the majority that voted in the previous presidential elections (more than 6 million votes) the National Citizens Initiative for Democracy will become the law of the land.

IS THIS PRIVATE ELECTORAL PROCESS LEGAL? - It's as legal as Article VII of the Constitution which authorized the convention of nine states to vote to create our government in 1787. Additionally, the Preamble of the Constitution is very clear on the subject in articulating that: **"WE, THE PEOPLE, DO ORDAIN."** Meaning we, the people, are the creators of the government. Therefore, it makes no sense for the people who created the government to have to ask the government for permission to make changes in the structure of government. Direct legislative action by people is legal historically because it rests on "first principles" that James Madison referred to when asked at the Constitutional Convention how they could create a new government. He answered that the "people just do it" - they exercise their "first principles".

Please go to [HTTP://NI4D.US](http://NI4D.US) to learn more about the **NATIONAL CITIZENS INITIATIVE FOR DEMOCRACY**.

The Roman Senator Cicero said it best more than 2000 years ago: "Freedom is participation in power." We Americans will never be truly free and self-governing until we participate in the central power of government: **LAWMAKING**.



Citizens The National Initiative For Democracy

Session 2: Models of Economic Democracy

Chair: Martin Brabec

Magdalena Hunčová – Economic Democracy in Theory and Practice

Michael Hauser – Planning as an Alternative

Marek Hrubec – Economic Democracy versus Economic Dictatorship

Break

Session 3: The Problems of Participation in Capitalism

Chair: Marek Hrubec

Jan Májíček – The Crisis of Capitalism and Participatory Democracy

Vlasta Hábová – (Contra)revolutionary Changes in Contemporary Capitalism; from the Abolition of Personal Dependence to its Emancipation or new Serfdom

Martin Brabec – Capitalism versus Democracy

Session 4: Deliberative Democracy

Chair Jiri Polak

Skype Discussion with Prof. Ted Becker, USA, and 3 panelists: Ned Crosby, USA, Prof. T. Ohlin, Sweden, and Susanne Haas Lyons, Canada – British Columbia

Sunday, Oct. 30

Session 1: Direct Democracy Development

Chair: Miloš Bárta

Jiří Musil – Town and Communal Units and Participatory Democracy

František Stožes – Revival of Hope for the 21st Century? Production Cooperatives

Radislav Kasík – Opportunities for the Establishment of Enterprises with the inclusion of elements of Economic Democracy

Break

Session 2: E-Democracy and Deliberative Democracy

Chair: Lukáš Kantor

Mikuláš Ferjenčík – The Pirate Party or Electronic Democracy Works

Petr Bajgar – Reflexion on Electronic Democracy

Erik Leško – Deliberative Consensus or Irreconcilable Disensus

Jiri Polak – What is Democracy?

Lunch Break

Session 3: E-Democracy

Chair and presentation: Miluš Kotišová

Panel Discussion

Conclusion of the Conference

Chair: Jiri Polak

PARTICIPANTS

International Participants:

Senator Mike Gravel, USA, President of NIC4D

Annie Machon, UK, global investigative journalist

Ero Liivik, Estonia, researcher

Eng.Federico Tonini, Italy, DDEV, President of Democrazia Federale

Dr.Jiri Polak, Sweden, WDDM, DD EV

Prof.Ted Becker, Auburn University, USA - through skype

Ned Crosby, USA, President of the Jefferson Center – through skype

Prof.Tomas Ohlin, Stockholm University, Sweden, through skype

Susanne Haas Lyons, Canada – British Columbia, activist

Czech Participants

Organizers: Ph.D.Marek Hrubec

Ph.D.Martin Brabec

Mgr.Lukáš Kantor

Eng.Zdeněk Trinkewitz

Mgr.Miluš Kotišová

Magdalena Hunčová

Michael Hauser

Jan Májíček

Vlasta Hábová

Miloš Bárta

Jiří Musil

František Stočes

Radislav Kasík

Mikuláš Ferjenčík

Petr Bajgar

Erik Leško

Since it was an Open Doors Conference, there were also many participants from the public.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Ph.D. Marek Hrubec: Models of Economic Democracy

The author discusses three principal models:

Parecon, i.e. Participative Economics

Enterprise Economic Democracy (contrary to Parecon, it admits planning to a very limited extent only and leaves most of the space to the market); Examples: the Cooperative Movement, Mondragon (in Spain), Participatory Budgeting (in more than 2.000 towns, regions or institutions in Brazil, Germany, France and other countries)

Autonomous Economic Democracy (each employee has one vote; the employees form employee councils, deliberate and make decisions; they divide profit among themselves, but cannot sell the capital fundament)

Very interesting paper, relevant for discussions about direct or participatory democracy because the economic system is inseparable from the political system. At the same time, economic models have been mostly missing in our discussions.

Eng.Zdeněk Trinkewitz: Financing Political Parties and Regulation of Political Campaigns

The author describes the situation in Czech Republic: The political scene is dominated by a few mafia-like bosses or

goodfathers. They own the big political parties which are completely corrupt. They are stealing national property on a large scale and transfer millions to their secret private accounts in tax paradises ("tunnelling"). They steer, directly or indirectly, even the mainstream media.

Franz Isemann, Germany: Antagonistic Cooperation

In Democracies, the individuals and parties have different opinions, and these different opinions form the basis for parties and election campaigns. And they remain to be different opinions of the different individuals and parties, even after the elections are over.

Dr.Jiri Polak: Models of Future Democracy (several graphic models put forward by various political thinkers); **Draft of a Citizens' Constitution of Czech Republic**; several recent issues of the *WDDM Newsletter*; **What is Democracy?**

Dr.Jiri Polak: What is Democracy?

The daily lives of almost all people living in both western and other countries are paralysed by one of the biggest deceptions in history: The myth pretending that power exerted by political parties, whether one or several, is democracy, and that no other form of democracy is possible in reality. However, many political thinkers round the world, perhaps especially in the USA, but also in Germany, UK, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and others, are proposing alternative democratic systems where political parties do not play any dominant role.

Many people pretend that such a radical change is impossible. To such standpoints we can object that what DD theorists propose is a change of paradigm and that paradigm changes do in fact take place when the anomalies threatening the validity of the paradigm can no longer be concealed or denied. This is precisely what is happening at present. Let me quote a few lines from the paper submitted by Eng.Trinkewitz. As the point of departure, he takes the situation observable in Czech Republic, but the basic elements are the same in all party based parliamentary systems. Concerning political parties he writes, "They are private enterprises from the beginning In some places, the proprietors choose the form of the so called 'steered democracy', where the family enterprise is not run directly by the owner, but by hired managers, i.e. professional politicians. There are also "registered corporations" belonging to juntas or the Maffia. In our "developed Western countries", the vested interest parties often assume the form of enterprises incorporate with (fully) limited responsibility. Besides, in our small Czech Republic, the parties have small membership bases. Furthermore, each base is divided into a close elite of functionaries who permanently distribute among themselves lucrative posts in established institutions and the administration, receiving high fees, and the party plebs, only needed during elections. Contrary to the legislation of the EU, these private entrepreneurial subjects (a petty fraction of the electorate) are subsidized by the state budget!"

This element of the party-based systems, i.e. Financing of political parties from public means, is only one of the anomalies revealing the lie pretending that these systems are democracies. Even worse is the party-based systems' participation in wars. People vote for this or that party because they expect it to guarantee, as much as possible, their short-term material prosperity. Once elected, politicians pretend that they got the mandate to start wars abroad or to send citizens of their country into wars waged by other oligarchies. Wars are not waged by countries or the people. They are waged by oligarchies supported by obscure background interests, using gullible little people as Kanonenfutter. Many people living in developing countries reject democracy because they believe that democracy is tantamount to colonialism and imperialism. War is the biggest crime imaginable. The system enabling the

leaders to send their citizens to war is not only illegitimate and undemocratic. It is right-down criminal. This is one of the main anomalies exposing the deception of the democratic myth. Another anomaly is the treatment of ecological systems. We hear all the time words like "We are destroying nature" or "Man is threatening the living conditions on the Planet" and the like. But who is this "We"? Who is this "Man"? It is not ordinary citizens, it is the oligarchies acting in an unholy alliance with greedy corporations and uncontrolled financial institutions, not giving a damn about the consequences. Yet another anomaly is the economy. We are facing a big crisis, throwing millions of people into poverty. And not only that. Politicians are confiscating even the small resources people have and bail out millionaires bathing in luxury. But people's patience is running out.

See what has happened in Iceland, what is happening in the USA, in Greece and elsewhere. Party-based oligarchies can only survive on conflicts, in a world full of "enemies" against whom the citizens must allegedly be protected by this or that party oligarchy. It is not sufficient to mend the system by only introducing the I&R process or deliberation about matters inside the system, while leaving the system itself basically unchanged. It is necessary to change the very system from the ground by adopting a citizens' constitution which would assign to the parties only as much power as the citizens seem fit. It is necessary to build a genuine democracy based on broad consensus instead of conflicts, on tolerance, mutual respect, on permanent peace, on long-term thinking for the benefit not only of this generation, but of many generations to come. Such a system cannot be based on party politics, because party politics is the very opposite of democracy. Such a system can only be established directly, by the citizens themselves.

MOMENTS FROM THE CONFERENCE



The Organizers and Chair.
From left to right: Eng.Z.Trinkewitz, Dr.J. Polak, Sen.Mike Gravel, Dr.M. Hrubec, Dr.M.Brabec



Left: A discussion about strategy between Sen.Mike Gravel and Dr.Jiri Polak
 Right: Ms Annie Machon and Mr.Ero Liivik



The Skype Discussion. *On the Screen, from the left: Prof.PhD.Ted Becker, USA, Ned Crosby, USA, Prof.Tomas Ohlin, Sweden, Susanne Haas Lyons, British Columbia, Canada; moderator in the hall: Dr.Jiri Polak*



Conference Hall



Conference Hall

INTERNATIONAL CANADA

USA

The progress of the Occupy Wall Street Movement can be followed at <http://www.adbusters.org>

10 december, Mr. **Evan Ravitz** wrote, "It has been awhile since our last newsletter, but "direct" democracy is doing better than ever, thanks to the **Occupy Movement**, which regards it as both a goal and a strategy. See this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dtD8RnGaRQ....>"

"Our fearless leader, famed former Senator **Mike Gravel**, gave his best interview ever three weeks ago: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sddgNfGWVTU&feature=youtube_gdata....."
See also <http://9-11cc.org>

28 december, letter from Mr. **Sandy Heierbacher**, Director, National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD), www.ncdd.org: "Join us for an NCDD Confab Call with thought leader Tom Atlee on Tuesday, January 17th at 2pm Eastern (11am Pacific). A quotation: "Our existing democratic-republican political system is clearly unable to deal with twenty-first-century challenges."

18 january, a letter from Mr. **Bruce Eggum**: "Excellent <http://upgradedemocracy.org>
"Wars have nothing to do with democracy, security, women's rights, peace or stability. They are fought for money and power and nothing else."

12 November, a letter sent by Mr. **Kevin Rea** to the e2d discussion channel (excerpts):

"As a web developer and business person, I have managed to have developed the voting system combined with public media and other features. It uses stock open source software from Drupal.org."

UponLocal – Direct Democracy Voting, Community Broadcasting, Interest Free Currency

<http://uponlocal.com/up-on-local-media>

GERMANY

Mehr Demokratie Magazin Nr. 90, 3/2011

Editorial by **Roman Huber**

Contents:

Michael Efler: Nur wer sich verändert bleibt sich treu
Der Fahrplan im Überblick: 19/20: Nov.2011 – Erste Beschlüsse auf der Mitgliederversammlung; März 2012 – Fachtagung in Berlin; Mai 2012 – Weitere Beschlüsse auf der Mitgliederversammlung; Sommer/Herbst 2012 – Mitgliederabstimmung
Lina Brink's interview with **Frank Schäffler** about a referendum concerning EU's plan to save the Euro.

Hans Hagedorn and **Sophie Scholz**: Ein Diskussionsformat für Bundesweite Volksentscheide?

Christoph Giese: Ein Sinneswandel
Kurznachrichten

Christin Ernst: Volksabstimmung wählen

Claudine Niirth: Uff, geschafft!
Ländertelegramm

Wiebke Hansen: Energiewende und Demokratie
Roland Geitmann: Stuttgart 21 – Energie für Mehr Demokratie
Alexander Strümpel: Islands Facebook-Verfassung
Carsten Berg: Der Countdown läuft – sind 20 Stimmen zu viel?
Tim Weber: Wiedersehen in Karlsruhe
Lina Ben Mhenni: Hoffnung auf Demokratie
Martin Bühler: Vertrauen in sich und die anderen
Gerald Häfner: Wir wollen mehr Demokratie Weltweit
 Am 30. Juni wurde in Brüssel eine internationale Vereinigung für mehr Demokratie gegründet
Kurt Wilhelm: Omnibus für direkte Demokratie

mdmagazin – Zeitschrift für direkte Demokratie 4/2011
 Editorial by Dr. **Michael Efler**
 Prof. Dr. **Matthias Rossi:** Die Bürgerklage
Roman Huber: Der Kasinokapitalismus gefährdet die Demokratie
 Prof. Dr. **Christoph Degenhart:** Finanzkrise und Demokratie
Fabian Hanneforth: Lektionen aus Kanada
 PD Dr. **Otmar Jung:** Grenzen direkter Demokratie
 Buchbesprechung: **Ronald Pabst:** Weniger Demokratie wagen?
 Interview with Gisela Erier, neue Staatsrätin für Zivilgesellschaft und Bürgerbeteiligung der grün-roten Landesregierung in Baden-Württemberg: Politik des Gehörtwerdens
Sarah Händel: S-21 – eine demokratische Bilanz
 Ländertelegramm
Martin Reyher: Hamburg glasklar
 etc.....
 The issue comprises 47 pages.

UK

14 October, a letter sent round by I&RgB:
 "Update on the Localism Bill – Community Empowerment?"
 October 13, 2011 By Natalia - "During the debate in the House of Lords this week, the entire chapter (18 clauses) on referendums has been dropped."

INIREF comments:
 The Conservative/Liberal-Democrat 2010 coalition agreement contains the following clear statement, p. 27,
 "We will give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue."

What are the promises of our politicians worth?"
 6 November: I&RgB wrote, "For decades, across the world, it has been accepted and practised that only an electorate – The People – may enact a state constitution. In many countries, a number of them in Europe, NO change can be made to state constitution unless (a) the electorate has been informed and consulted (b) a broad and extended public debate has been enabled and organised (c) a referendum (plebiscite) has been held for the final decision."

Interesting website: <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2011/12/489675.html>
 See also <http://www.iniref.org>

25 January, Dr. **W. Macpherson** wrote: "Considering the Quality of Independence for Scotland
 You say you want your Independence w-e-e-ll you know,
 We all wanna change the world...
 (After J. Lennon)
 The referendum question or proposal – as far as the public

knows in January 2012 – has not yet been finally decided. Let us suppose that people resident in Scotland are asked to vote for or against Scotland becoming an independent country. Maybe after the years of Scottish National Party (SNP) campaigning the "yes" voters will win in 2014.

And then?
 What will we have achieved?

As a Scot, in favour of peoples' self-determination, of power devolved to regions, localities, above all to citizens, of strong democracy in the form of rule-by-the-people... (a)... I have my doubts about the proposed decision to separate Scotland from England and the rest of the UK."

"Discuss at our Wordpress blog, on Facebook or in other fora
<http://iniref.wordpress.com/scotland-quality-of-independence>

SWITZERLAND

17 December, information from I&RgB: "Electronic voting in the national referendum ballot March 2012; Bern, 16.12.2011 – On 16th December for twelve counties the Government approved the use of electronic voting in the ballot timed for 11th March 2012. About 122,000 voters will be able to vote by using the Internet, all of these twelve counties have run tests of Internet voting."

Europa-Magazin 2/2011: Edito: **Paul Ruppen;** Forum: "Die direkte Demokratie gerät in der Schweiz zunehmend unter Druck."

Herbert Schui: Die deutsche Regierung und die Euro-Krise
 Kurzinfos

Paul Ruppen: Euro-Krise – kein Weg aus der Falle?
 Buchbesprechungen

Paul Ruppen: Le programme du parti socialiste suisse, l'Union Européenne et le dépassement du capitalisme

Annette Groth: "Festung Europa" wird weiter aufgerüstet

René Roca: Direkte Demokratie im internationalen Kontext
 Kurzinfos

SWEDEN

21 November: Dr. **Bruno Kaufmann** wrote, "The Democracy Report of the town of Falun 2011 is the first milestone of a long-term work in our commune. Citizen deliberation and participation of the inhabitants of the commune in their common affairs is going to be strengthened. The democracy work is based on a non-partisan recognition of the importance of democratic steering for good society and of the necessity to considerably strengthen the participatory democratic infrastructure.

The Democracy Report of Falun 2011 brings many proposals and ideas concerning the areas to be strengthened during the coming years and the way this activity is to be planned and co-ordinated.

In the spring of 2011, during the continued preparatory work, all relevant factors will be identified, consulted and included, so that the final documents – the plan of action, the steering document and the political platform – will clearly and explicitly describe the continuing work. So that, successively, it will be possible to fulfil the overall objective put forward by the Town Council, i.e. "to make Falun the best in citizen dialogue".

Dr. **Bruno Kaufmann**, chairman of the Preparatory Democracy Committee and president of IRI – Europe
 A few websites suggested by Bruno: (Iceland, USA and Switzerland)
<http://zocalopublicsquare.org/thepublicsquare/2011/09/21/our->

insanely-direct-democracy/read/the-takeaway/
[http://www.newamerica.net/events/2011/modern_direct_ democracy_and_the_american_west](http://www.newamerica.net/events/2011/modern_direct_democracy_and_the_american_west)
<http://stofnanir.hi.is/mannrettindastofnun/en/conferences>
[http://www.thinkswiss.org/swiss-portrait/modern-direct- democracy/in-the-future](http://www.thinkswiss.org/swiss-portrait/modern-direct-democracy/in-the-future)

DENMARK

3 October, a letter from Denmark sent round by Mr. Paul Nollen (excerpt), "My brother in law and I have started up a party for direct democracy in Denmark, with the obvious name of **Direkte Demokrati**"..... "We ... have a professionally made website with a nice simple design, that we will like to offer free of charge to sister parties in other countries. I don't know for a fact if this is possible though, but it should be since we use CMS webdesign. Read our "Export Democracy" section on our website here: <http://www.ddid.dk>"

Cheers. *Frederik*

UKRAINE

13 November, an article sent by Ms *Maria Ivanova*, Worldwide News Ukraine

Local Democracy as Direct Democracy Surrogate for State-ruled Societies

Despite willing to establish direct democracy in our societies, many of us understand that there is a long way ahead of us before states will be suitable for real direct democracy. For that we need high level of education for all the members of our societies and effective means of quick processing of the voting data, which are nowhere to be seen as of yet.

Turns out, The Council of Europe actually pays a lot of attention to local democracy – a version of direct democracy that is considered more or less implementable in modern state-ruled societies. In early November 2011 Ukraine completed its chairmanship at the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Ukraine introduced a number of measures to strengthen local democracies in the countries of Europe, as well as provide its citizens with broader opportunities to participate in local decision-making. Such was one of the three Ukraine's priorities while presiding at the PACE.

To me, this is an important sign of the ongoing realization by current governing bodies in Europe that the principles of direct democracy – taking into consideration the opinion of all the members of the society – need to be acknowledged and faced. Modern technology allows for people to communicate and voice their opinions via various mediums. This allows people to see if they are alone in their opinion or there are others who think the same. Blatant lie is not possible in modern societies, and modern democracies are gradually grasping the need to come to terms with reality.

Although not much has been done by Ukraine during its PACE chairmanship, the government still managed to organize several events that carried substantial impact on the issue of developing local democracies both internationally and on the local level (given the fact that, locally, Ukraine cannot boast any significant local democracy achievements, yet). These events include: International seminar on improvement of the standards in public ethic at local and regional levels (September 15, 2011), the session of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in Kyiv (September 16,

2011), and International Municipal Hearings "The Development of Effective Governance at Local and Regional Level" (November 1-2, 2011).

The President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich paid a visit to the International Municipal Hearings where he specified his personal investment in the issue of regional development and urged Ukrainian local leaders to "gradually decentralize and transfer certain powers to the regions". We must make the regions self-sufficient," noted the Ukrainian President.

Ukraine itself is putting some effort in to develop its local administration in order to secure an opportunity for its citizens to personally participate in the management of the state. Given all of this is only done under the pressure of the international institutions – the likes of the EU – this is still an overwhelmingly positive development.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that quite recently Ukraine also signed the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority. Ukraine ratified the said Charter



in 1997; the new addition to the document secures the right of everyone within the jurisdiction of a local governing body to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe's Action Plan for Ukraine 2011-2014 "A Partnership for Reform", presented this September, includes three programs for local democracy development in the country. Local democracy is listed as one of the key sectors for intervention in the new Plan. This involves support for local government reforms, strengthening the institutional capacity of the local authorities, and strengthening leadership by locally elected representatives. The plan aims to help Ukraine promote transparency and quality of local government services.

Just several years ago, when I joined the direct democracy movement, I could not even imagine that issues like local democracy could actually ever become a real working instrument that, as time goes by, will become more and more like those direct democracy implies.



Ero Liivik

Lecturer

Estonian Academy of Security Sciences

Referendum in the Estonian Constitution:

Historical and Comparative Constitutional Aspects

ESTONIA

30 October, an article sent by Mr. *Ero Liivik*, researcher at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences; Paper presented for the **Proceedings of the Institute for European Studies**, Tallin University: **Legitimacy through Direct Democracy in the EU Member State: Direct Democratic Initiatives in the Estonian Parliament**

Abstract:

Legitimacy is particularly important in democracies since democracy survival is ultimately dependent on the support of at least a majority of its citizens. One way of increasing both legislative drafting and legitimacy of the political system is to apply direct democracy (referendums) more widely – citizens consider referendums the most authentic and immediate way of expressing their will – therefore, decisions made by referendums have a substantially bigger significance than those made by representative power. The citizens are better informed and more involved in politics when they have direct-democratic participation possibilities in the political process. We can state that there is a growing trend of using direct democracy as a means of legitimizing aspects of the European integration project. In the decade between 1998 and 2008, twenty-four referendums were held on various aspects of European integration. At the same time the analysis of the actual situation in Estonia shows that holding referendums is sporadic and there are no mechanisms to legalize popular initiative. Therefore the referendum (or direct democracy in a wider sense) cannot be considered a guarantee for legitimate legal drafting as governing parties evade it, preferring legislative drafting in a traditional parliamentary way. The article deals with direct democracy which is legitimate according to the new constitution in the Republic of Estonia, one of the EU Member States that has witnessed direct democracy in the form of a referendum only once during its re-

independence period (1992-2010). The referendum referred to above was directly related to Estonia's accession to the EU and held in 2003. A research of opinion polls conducted among the residents of Estonia reveals that there is significant interest in exercising direct democracy but most parties do not comply with this interest; in the parliament, each and every initiative for direct democracy has been rejected, including legalization of popular initiative. Therefore the referendum cannot provide guarantee for legitimacy, for whether they will be carried out or not is directly dependent on the will of the governing elite. If there is no will, referendums will not be held.

Please take a look at: <http://www.juridicainternational.eu/authors/liivik-ero/>

FINLAND

31 January, information from Mr. *Paul Nollen*: "A new form of participation on the state level, citizens' initiative, will be taken into use in Finland on 1 March 2012. It offers citizens a possibility to have their initiative considered by the Parliament. The objective of the new system is to promote free civic activity. According to the new provision in the Constitution, which enters into force in the beginning of March, at least fifty thousand Finnish citizens entitled to vote have the right to submit an initiative for the enactment of an Act to the Parliament. The Act on citizens' initiative includes provisions on the procedure to be followed when organising a citizens' initiative.

.....
The Parliament is obliged to take the citizens' initiative up for consideration, but thereafter it is the Parliament's discretion whether the initiative will be approved or if it shall be amended in some way. If the Parliament decides to reject the initiative, a new initiative on the same subject matter may be submitted."

SPAIN

26 January, a letter sent round by Mr. **Eduardo Robles Elvira** (excerpt): "I am a member of the Agora Ciudadana development team, the liquid democracy solution we plan to use in the Spanish political party "Partido de Internet". Here is a detailed technical article about the system we are developing: <http://www.agoraciudadana.org/2011/09/agora-a-virtual-parliament>

ITALY

3 October, a letter sent by Mr. Paul Nollen to e2d-international: "Hi All, my name is Matteo Martini and I am an Italian engineer working in Tokyo. I am currently in contact with several people interested in the topic of Direct Democracy and I have tried to work in this direction myself. I have built up a site for I-democracy: <http://www.idemocracy.it/>"

ITALY-UK

3 October, a letter from **I&R- GB**, "Over a million citizens of Italy are using their democratic rights to demand a countrywide referendum.

(The English language "media" prefer to focus on the role of a single company owner.)

"On Friday, three truckloads of petitions signed by 1.2 million citizens were delivered to court officials in Rome. The petitions demand a referendum be held calling for the end of the electoral system giving the top vote-getting party a bonus of seats in Parliament."

Why in Britain do we voters NOT have a similar right to propose and obtain a referendum?

Sample report: <http://newsok.com/article/feed/302625> "

LIBYA

In spite of the death of Moammar Gaddafi, **Jamahiriya** - the Libyan form of direct democracy - is still active. See: <http://www.elac-committees.org/>

EUROPE

Mr. **Carlo Marinis**, Italy, has written a **Draft of a Direct Democratic Constitution for the European Union** (25 pages)

"Problems cannot be resolved using the same frame of thought that produced them" Albert Einstein

Contents

1. Preface to proposal for a European Constitution
2. Draft of a direct democratic federal Constitution for the European Union.
 - Preamble
 - Chapter I – Authority of the European Union
 - Chapter II – General provisions
3. Declaration of people's sovereignty
4. Invitation to all those who want to become sovereign citizens
5. Experiences of direct democracy
6. Historical curiosity: democracy in early Christian communities
7. Annex

No web-site or e-mail address is mentioned. To get in touch with the author, it would be probably necessary to use Google or Facebook.

17 February, information from Mr. **Ronald Pabst** (excerpt): "At a time when the EU is placing great burdens on its citizens, we need more European democracy. Currently the citizens are too often left on the sidelines. Now we welcome a new proposal to extend citizens' rights before the Parliament, but unfortunately powerful interests want to block it. Together with several groups from all over Europe we have started a petition. But we don't have much time: the Members of Parliament will decide soon. Now it's up to you – the citizens of Europe. If we act together we may be able to prevent this initiative from failing. At the moment, this is the only one of the many official EU proposals which aims to expand citizens' rights in Europe – so PLEASE sign this appeal from Democracy International. Now." <http://www.more-democracy-in-europe.org>

THE WORLD

14 February, information from Mr. **Sven Mason** (excerpt): "...you can see a list of projects E2D has recorded at: http://e2d-international.org/wiki/index.php?title=E-Voting_Taskforce and discussions at <http://e2d-international.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=10>

The E2D members do not have a consensus on what software is the best, there is a work-group currently in its infancy which is discussing sharing resources to collaborate on a software package that serves DD parties: <http://e2d-international.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=42&t=213>

SIMPOL

6 January 2012, information from Mr. **John Bunzl** (excerpts): "**The Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) campaign** is one of the fastest growing global citizens' movements. Simpol is how we, citizens around the world, can use our votes in our national elections to drive our politicians and governments to cooperate to solve urgent global problems; problems like climate change, financial market chaos and social injustice.

So far 25 Members of the UK Parliament and elected representatives in a number of other national parliaments have pledged to implement Simpol's developing range of global policies simultaneously alongside other governments."

Germany: <http://integralesleben.org/de/il-home/eia-european-integral-academy/aktuelle-projekte/kampagne-fuer-simultan-politik>

If you'd like to get involved with campaigning for Simpol Germany, please contact Dirk at -dirkweiler-@web.de

Donations at:

<http://www.betterplace.org/de/projects/8544-simultanpolitik-kampagne-fur-deutschland>

To support the launch, John Bunzl has been invited to make a keynote presentation at the annual conference of the German Integral Forum to be held in Berlin, June 2012. For details (in German), please go to

<http://integralesleben.org/if-home/if-integrales-forum/jahrestagung/if-tagung-2012-berlin/>

Global website: <http://www.simpol.org> A brand new site is under construction.

National campaigns: UK www.simpol.org.uk

Australia www.simpol-oz.org

New Zealand www.simpol-nz.org France www.simpol-fr.org
 Germany (when it launches) www.simpol-de.org
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 Ken Wilber's Integral Theory:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integral_Theory

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