

European
Local
Democracy
Week



ASSESSMENT OF THE 2023 EDITION



The Congress

Le Congrès



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FOREWORD

Mathieu Mori,
Secretary General of the Congress



Dear ELDW partners,

The year 2023 posed significant challenges to local and regional authorities. They had to cope with economic and energy crises as well as high inflation rates that weighted on both them and their citizens. Moreover, they confronted the repercussions of multiple conflicts: the war of aggression against Ukraine that started almost two years ago, but also the sudden escalation of enduring conflicts in Karabakh and in the Middle East.

Additionally, European countries continued to face the consequences of climate change and global warming, growing in their intensity and presenting an existential threat which demands urgent action. All these difficulties unfolded against a global backdrop marked by democratic backsliding and challenges to the core values that Europe seeks to uphold. Amidst these various crises, local and regional authorities consistently found themselves at the forefront. They had to face and mitigate the impact of these challenges, while addressing their citizens' needs and expectations. In 2023, their important role in upholding democracy, human rights and the rule of law in their communities was recognised by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States at their Summit in Reykjavik in May.

Given the context of multifaceted crisis and the key role of local authorities, helping local governments to strengthen the democratic resilience and sustainability of their communities must be a priority. That is why we have decided to devote the 2023 and 2024 editions of the ELDW to the theme "**Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront**".

Local governments represent the primary link to citizens, forming the bedrock on which citizen participation and local democracy are built. The resilience of democratic societies during complex crises and challenges relies on this foundational level of governance.

The objective of the biennial theme is to bolster the resilience of local authorities by addressing several subjects, such as access to information and resources – especially for the most marginalised groups-, citizens' involvement in the decision-making process and fostering open, transparent, and democratic governance. These different matters constitute the essential building blocks for creating communities capable of quickly recovering from crises and providing efficient responses, building on the resources and confidence that were developed through the cooperation between authorities and citizens.

Regarding the 2023 edition of the ELDW, let me congratulate the 51 local authorities and their associations from 18 countries who took part in the initiative and celebrated the Week with us. They organised a wide range of events in line with the main theme. Their efforts have contributed to making the ELDW a truly pan-European initiative, ensuring the participation of all citizens without discrimination at all levels of society through inclusive projects and events.

In the upcoming year, I hope for an even greater participation from all over the 46 member states and invite you to organise within your communities together with your citizens more initiatives focusing on democratic resilience.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Mathieu Mori

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.

This evaluation report is based on the information received from the ELDW participants in 2023, including from the local and regional authorities and their associations which applied for the “Partner of the ELDW 2023” 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 2023, the year in which local and regional authorities actively participated the ELDW initiative for the 16th time.

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

The Congress 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’ engagement, and today the examples of best practices of citizen participation across Europe and in neighbouring countries are growing.

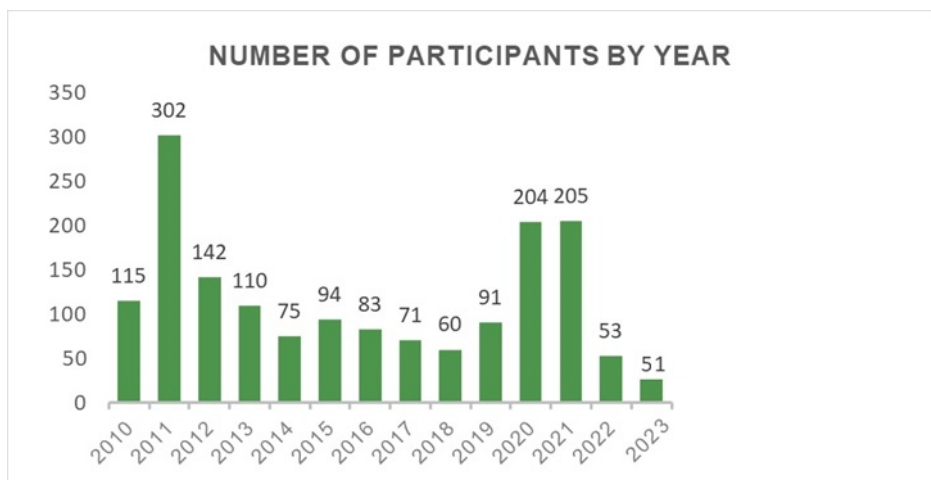
In cooperation with the Congress, the ELDW initiative has collected data and good practice examples of citizens’ participation and human rights implementation at local level,

of raising elected representatives' awareness about their responsibilities, as well as of promoting transparency, accountability, citizens' commitment, and cultural diversity. The figures and activities included in this evaluation report prove that even despite the ongoing challenges, the ELDW participants continue to work hard to uphold democratic values and use all their resources to keep citizens safe and involved.

More information is available on the homepage of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (www.coe.int/en/web/congress) and the web page of the European Local Democracy Week (<https://www.congress-eldw.eu/en/>).

FIGURES FOR 2023¹

In 2023, the European Local Democracy Week was officially held throughout the year with the main events taking place in the week of 15 October. Local and regional authorities, their national as well as European associations and networks have organised their events with the support of civil society organisations. The contribution of local stakeholders disseminating information and raising awareness on the 2023 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**

During the 2023 edition, 51 participants from 18 countries took part in the ELDW initiative.

The ELDW team only collects information provided 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 51 registered partners, 8 were associations and 43 local or regional authorities which organised 276 events in 18 countries. All off these events were officially registered with a description and published on the ELDW homepage.

Türkiye, Portugal, Belgium and Ukraine were the most active countries in this year's edition. Six countries, which were represented in the 2022 edition, did not register any participants in the 2023 edition: Albania, Austria, Ireland, Morocco, San Marino, and Slovakia. Countries that did not participate in 2022 but were represented in the ELDW initiative in 2023 were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Italy, Norway and Spain.

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 that 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 (posters, promotion of activities at school...) using the ELDW visual identity decided upon and provided by the Congress;
3. Carry out a number of specific activities linked to the leading theme of the year;
4. Organise an event with a European or pan-European dimension to raise awareness about the Council of Europe and its Congress and to illustrate the role of local authorities in the construction of a democratic Europe. A Congress representative may be invited to this main event;
5. Extend the social scope of the initiative by reaching out to different groups of citizens, especially the groups that can feel excluded (children, elderly, women, Roma and Travellers, people with a disability, minorities...);
6. Promote the engagement of young people and youth organisations, including by involving or creating youth councils;
7. Implement sustainable initiatives thereby creating an environment in which citizens and local authorities share the same long-term goals, namely, to reinforce citizens' awareness and participation in decision making;
8. Implement innovative activities and projects.

After a careful assessment of compliance with the criteria, the “Partner of the ELDW 2023” status was awarded to the following municipalities:

1. Municipality of Ahmetbey (Türkiye)
2. Municipality of Alimos (Greece)
3. City of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
4. Municipality of Buca (Türkiye)
5. Municipality of Büyükçekmece (Türkiye)
6. Municipality of Cascais (Portugal)
7. Municipality of Çiğli (Türkiye)
8. Municipality of Kırklareli (Türkiye)
9. Local Councils’ Association (Malta)
10. Municipality of Lüleburgaz (Türkiye)
11. City of Lviv (Ukraine)
12. Municipality of Ramnicu Valcea (Romania)
13. Municipality of Valongo (Portugal)
14. Municipality of Vicovaro (Italy)

In the 2023 edition, 14 participants received the “Partner of the ELDW 2023” title, which pays tribute to the special commitment they have shown through their participation in the European Local Democracy Week. The title was granted to 21 local and regional authorities for the 2022 edition and to 21 local and regional authorities for the 2021 edition.

Before the “Partner of the ELDW” title, the “12 Stars City” status was awarded between 2010 and 2019. The status was a voluntary label for strongly involved cities and associations that, on registering for the latest edition of the ELDW, made a commitment to fulfil five criteria established for the status. The table below shows the number of participants which received either the 12 Stars City status or the title of Partner of the EDLW title.



Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront

In today's world, communities face many global challenges that are seemingly more prevalent than ever and evolving at an unprecedented rate. Climate change and global warming are existential threats to humankind that need to be mitigated to the greatest possible extent. These challenges are compounded by the reverberating effects of wars, exacerbating existing crises and triggering a cascade of humanitarian emergencies, soaring inflation rates, and widespread displacement worldwide. Furthermore, the continuation of natural disasters - such as earthquakes and flood disaster - worsens the situation in the affected areas.

During times of crisis, the significance of democratic institutions becomes most apparent, as citizens turn to their local governments for support and guidance. This underscores the imperative to build democratic resilience in societies and prioritize the protection of individuals. For this reason, the ELDW theme chosen for 2023-2024 was «*Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront*». The biennial theme was proposed and discussed at the annual coordination meeting on 28 February 2023 and was approved by the Congress Bureau on 20 March 2023.

Thanks to its 16 years of experience, the ELDW initiative has the capacity to support local and regional governments in taking action to increase their resilience, in response to these crises. The main objectives of the 2023 ELDW edition were to design initiatives aimed at involving all groups of society into decision-making processes within their local and regional authorities. It also aimed to promote transparent governance practices to enhance the livability, sustainability, and resilience of cities against various challenges, including pandemics, droughts, fires, floods, and other consequences of global warming and climate change.

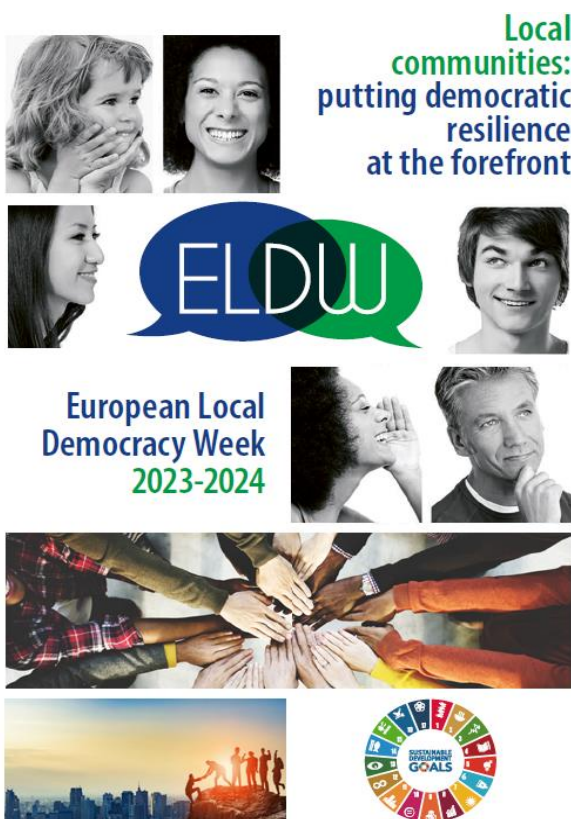
THE ELDW IN PREVIOUS EDITIONS	
YEARS	THEMES
2023-2024	Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront
<p>This year's theme focuses on local actions to encourage public participation in local democracy and strengthen the democratic process. It also highlights the importance of building resilient communities by empowering citizens to exercise their full political and democratic rights at local, regional, and national levels.</p>	
2022-2021	Protecting the environment: local communities take action
<p>Responding to climate change calls for immediate joint actions with citizens aimed at building resilient communities in Europe. Local and regional authorities are key players in tackling the global problem of climate change.</p>	
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
<p>The theme was intended to encourage European local and regional authorities to promote awareness of the responsibilities that are incumbent for a democratic society.</p>	
2011	Human rights - What about your backyard?
<p>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.</p>	
2010	The impact of sustainable communities in fighting climate change
<p>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.</p>	

HIGHLIGHTS AND FLAGSHIP EVENTS

During the ELDW 2023 edition, local and regional authorities and their associations organised varied events and effectively involved citizens in the decision-making process through collective actions.

The 2023 edition received a number of registered activities which stood at 276 as of 31 December 2023.



The activities have been wide-ranging and enabled municipalities to a variety of subjects: increasing citizens' democratic participation, reinforcing local and regional authorities' capacity to prepare for and manage crises, raising awareness of new technologies, facilitating access to knowledge and resources, enhancing the functionality of local government and transparency, and developing new participatory mechanisms.

Modern communication tools and innovative methods of citizen participation were combined with traditional approaches. Many workshops and exchanges were held to broaden participation in local decision-making processes and raise awareness of sustainable and resilient city initiatives. Furthermore, local authorities and associations have organized various activities to promote democratic participation such as resilience-themed exhibitions, panel discussions on community resilience, workshops on participatory decision-making processes and capacity building workshops.

Some of the highlights and activities organized by municipalities and cities are detailed on the following pages. All activities are documented on the ELDW website for further reference and details.

The **Municipality of Ahmetbey (Türkiye)** is a long-term partner of the ELDW. In 2023, the municipality organized several activities. One of them was a meeting between the mayor of Ahmetbey, neighborhood headmen and delegates of classes who were elected through democratic elections in local schools. The collaboration between the elected class representatives, the Mayor of Ahmetbey, and neighborhood headmen underscores the interconnectedness of various levels of governance. It demonstrates a holistic approach to democracy, where representatives from different spheres of the community come together to discuss matters of mutual concern. In addition, a conference on democracy and the republic was held to promote civic participation and awareness among young people.



The **Municipality of Alimos (Greece)** participated in the EDLW for the first time in 2023. The municipality organized activities related to different subjects. Alimos notably included people with disabilities in the implemented initiatives. For instance, the municipality created a sandbox made from 100% recycled plastic which allows children in a wheelchair to create sand projects and play with other children. The Municipality of Alimos also organized the public 6th Panhellenic Disability Fashion Show during the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3rd). This event aimed to spotlight and celebrate the talents of people with disabilities.



The **Municipality of Amadora (Portugal)** hosted two events for the ELDW in 2023. In line with the theme of that year's edition, Amadora celebrated the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction in October. Throughout the week, Amadora organized a series of initiatives under the theme "Fighting Inequalities for a Resilient Future." These included the presentation of the publication "Academia Sénior - A Winning Project," the release of a film commemorating the "International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction", a webinar titled "Combating Inequalities for a Resilient Future," and a technical-operational exhibition titled "Civil Protection and the Community."



The **Municipality of Bağcılar (Türkiye)** has implemented the "Public Opinion Program" as an indicator of highlighting the democratic resilience of the local people. In this program, which is held every Wednesday at the Municipality Service Building, citizens can meet the Mayor of Bağcılar in person without making an appointment. Vice-presidents and unit managers are also present at the public opinion meetings. All problems are noted by authorized personnel and then solved by directing the citizen to the relevant units. This program empowers citizens by giving them a voice and promotes a culture of active civic engagement.



The **City of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina)** created a Citizens' Assembly on the topic "Youth and Entrepreneurship: Supporting Innovations for Sustainable Development", thanks to a grant obtained as part of the "Innovating Democratic Participation at the Local Level in Bosnia and Herzegovina" project implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Assembly started in February 2023 and will end in March 2024. This project aims at enhancing local democracy quality and providing citizens with opportunities to engage in innovative participatory processes in Banja Luka.



The **Municipality of Buca (Türkiye)** has organized many activities such as awareness trainings, panels and workshops themed on sustainability and resilient cities. With an activity called the one of activities which named "Peers Share with Peers Panel", the municipality of Buca gathered as an organization that participated in and applied to EWW (European Week for Waste Reduction) to work on the themes of "Packaging" and "Don't Get wrapped Up!" for the year 2023. The aim of the event is to enable students and young people, who represent a significant part of the population of the Buca district, to raise awareness within their age group by acquiring information from other students and young people engaged in activities relevant to the theme of this year. The goal is for them to share the knowledge they acquire here with their communities, be motivated to actively participate in practical initiatives, and be included in volunteer activities.



The **Municipality of Büyükçekmece (Türkiye)** has established the "Voice of the Street" team to address the demands and complaints of residents who may face challenges contacting or visiting the municipality. This team visits neighborhoods, and streets and listens to the demands and complaints of local people. They are recorded instantly through

the Ulakbel system, the digital application of the municipality. Residents are given a tracking number via SMS to inform the flow of work. Additionally, team members who record the demands and complaints follow up with residents upon completion of the work, obtaining satisfaction feedback. This approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also fosters a culture of ongoing citizen engagement and participation in Büyükçekmece.



The **Municipality of Cascais (Portugal)** participated in the EDLW for the fifth time in 2023. The municipality created many activities for this edition. One example is the workshop and debate held on October 24th on the subject “Artificial intelligence and the role of politicians in the future of democracy”. The first part of the event was a workshop in English that specifically addressed the trends and challenges that AI brings to democracy, with two classes of secondary school students as guests.

This was followed by a panel with youth representatives from the municipality's party groups, who accepted the challenge launched by Cascais Town Council to speak on the subject. The aim was to understand the threats to democracy by sharing experiences and ways of overcoming them.



The **Municipality of Çiğli (Türkiye)** has launched the “Value My City” project in İzmir, is a comprehensive initiative designed to empower young people and enhance collaboration with local governments in shaping an inclusive and rights-based urban policy. The project supports young people in generating innovative solutions through small grants for addressing urban challenges. Participants receive a rights-based education, fostering a sense of responsibility and advocacy. The inclusion of international participants and thematic events such as “Reuse / Reduce / Recycle / Reproduce” adds a cross-cultural dimension and promotes sustainable urban development.



The **Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye)** celebrates the European Heritage Days since 2022 within the framework of the activities aimed to ensure visibility to the Council of Europe. Edremit also organized the first General Assembly of Türkiye's first Local Democracy Agency (LDA), coordinated by ALDA (the European Association for Local Democracy). This initiative underlines the significant cooperation between ALDA, Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) and the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities. The General Assembly facilitated extensive deliberations and exchanges between civil society stakeholders and local authorities, with a shared vision for promoting sustainability and resilience in the future. These discussions focused on charting a course for future projects aimed at enhancing community well-being and democratic engagement.



The **City of Fastiv (Ukraine)** carried out several activities related to the ELDW throughout the year. For example, in October, Fastiv educational institutions held roundtable discussions among students and school self-government leaders on topics related to local democracy. Students learned about the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the activities of the city councils, reviewed the mechanisms and tools for ensuring decision-making at the local and regional level, and discussed the achievements of local

democracy in Ukraine and Europe. They also presented their projects aimed at development of local democracy.



The **Municipality of Forest (Belgium)** created the "Citizens' Council of Forest" (CCF) in 2021. During this local participatory process, participants choose a topic they will study and debate in order to formulate collective recommendations. This year, the CCF chose to work on the topic of democratic resilience and citizen involvement in times of crisis. During the first meeting in October, the participants got to know the subject in depth thanks to the help of resource people. The second meeting in November was dedicated to exchange and debate. In December, the CCF met for the last time to formulate collective recommendations. To enable the general public to get to know the work of the CCF, a briefing brochure, session reports and a final report of conclusions were created.



The **Municipality of Kırklareli (Türkiye)** has been organizing ELDW events every year since 2018. In relation to this year's theme, Kırklareli Municipality organized many activities such as, consultation meeting with headmans, municipality visits of high school students. As a result of these meetings, an interactive environment was created for young people. All young people made a common decision to make women more visible regarding participatory democracy. The problems of disabled and Roma people were discussed.



The **Community of Kirklees (United Kingdom)** supported all schools in Kirklees to become Democracy Friendly regarding the ELDW 2023 edition. Young people aged 11 to 16 had the opportunity to develop their skills, confidence and experience by participating in training program and becoming a Kirklees Youth Councillor. More schools joined this Program during European Local Democracy Week. They have also organized many activities to invite citizens to tell their representatives how they feel about getting involved in their community and being part of civic life. Citizens participated by completing and online scorecard and telling how they feel, by requesting a printed Conversation Pack to use in their community, or by sharing their personal story. Furthermore, they organized political awareness workshops for young council staff.



The **City of Lviv (Ukraine)** actively participated in the ELDW in 2023, despite the wartime. Among the different events organized, in October, the city held 10 educational meetings in the Lviv City Council around the theme "Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront in Wartime". These meetings were attended by 300 senior high school students from schools affiliated with the populated areas of the Lviv community and students from Lviv universities. During these events, discussions covered

the functioning of the executive bodies of the Lviv City Council and the parliamentary body, forms of civic participation, and youth entrepreneurial initiatives. The mechanisms of public influence on decision-making by the Lviv City Council were analyzed, particularly through the public budget, electronic petitions, competitions for civic organizations, and other forms of civic participation.



The **Local Council's Association (Malta)** has encouraged and rewarded the variety of children's projects recognizing their participation in sustainable activities. They also launched a "Training Program for all the Local Councils" during a conference and this program was based on the practice of good governance and it also focused on the EU funds and participatory budgeting.



The **Municipality of Lüleburgaz (Türkiye)** has organized events in accordance with the themes of the ELDW since 2011. After the year 2023 was declared as the "Year of Democracy and Republic", the municipality organized a Children's Festival with the participation of the City Council Children's Assembly and volunteer children in order to ensure that urban children spend their time with entertaining, creative and instructive activities. The Lüleburgaz Municipality declared 2024 as the year of "Disaster and Coordination" as a result of meetings and surveys with Public Institutions and NGOs. Thematic year slogans to be used throughout the Year of Disaster and Coordination 2024 were determined with a competition opened to everyone over the age of 9.



The **Municipality of Ramnicu Valcea (Romania)** has been participating in the ELDW since 2017. The municipality implemented a wide range of activities in 2023, including some activities dedicated to the marginalized Roma population. On April 8, on the occasion of the International Day of Roma population, Ramnicu Valcea organized an event to celebrate the Roma culture and raise awareness about the problems faced by this community. Moreover, the municipality is implementing the project “Sustainable local development and promotion of social inclusion in the marginalized community Colonie Nuci”. The goal of the project is to improve the inhabitants’ social inclusion, quality of life and environment, chances of employment in the formal sector and access to education services.



The **association “Resilience.Earth” (Spain)** is non-profit cooperative of 14 rural community-based workers, researchers and educators. In 2023, the association organized “Itir”, a national-scale festival for rural communities, in cooperation with the Municipality of Argelaguer. This event aimed at exploring and celebrating the emergence of community-based governance methodologies and strategies that are supported by public administration and include the participation of socially and ecologically conscious businesses and cooperatives.

The festival was also the occasion to present the ELDW and encourage the participating organizations and municipalities to promote this initiative and create events within their capacities.



The **Union of Communities of Armenia** helped different Armenian municipalities to carry out a wide variety of activities throughout the year. For example, Stepenavan Municipality organized a seminar-training entitled “Informed citizen sustainable future” in June in the central library of the municipality. The library readers demonstrated their solution options for increasing the awareness of the residents of the community and especially young people – about democracy, governance and green development. They were also informed about the ELDW initiative.



The **Municipality of Valongo (Portugal)** has been an active participant in the ELDW for numerous years. In 2023, the municipality was also very involved and organized numerous activities on a wide range of issues. Valongo notably organized an event called “What We Are” which presented good practices and projects from municipal services. The goal of this event was to promote transparency, citizen participation, knowledge sharing and the development of active citizenship.



The Municipality of Vicovaro (Italy) created the initiative “Telling the mayor!” during which a group of students from 13 to 15 years old met the mayor. A preparatory meeting was first held, during which the students selected several issues of their concerns with the help of an adult. Subsequently, they engaged in a discussion with the mayor, expressing their wishes, including a multifunctional sports field, a skateboard track, and a wall for murals, among others. Many of the young people's proposals were accepted, leading to the mayor's proposed actions:

1. The children were encouraged to transform the request for the multifunctional sports field into a concrete project to be financed in the upcoming spring;
2. Vicovaro will acquire installations for removable murals. Riccardo, a young writer, has been tasked with painting a 'Bench for Peace' for the celebrations on December 8th;
3. Vicovaro will establish a Youth Council to enhance the effectiveness and structure of exchanges between local authorities and the youth.



➤ **THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK**

The Annual Coordination Meeting of the European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) was held in person on 27 February 2024 in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. It brought together representatives from member States of the Council of Europe, coming from municipalities who had taken an active part in this Congress initiative in 2023.

Participants evaluated the 2023 ELDW edition under the theme “Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront” and shared their best practices.

At the end of the meeting, the title of “Partner of the European Local Democracy Week 2023” was awarded to 14 municipalities and associations from Türkiye, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, Ukraine, Romania, and Italy in recognition of their commitment to the ELDW and to promoting local democracy. The awarded municipalities have implemented a number of initiatives such as participatory budgets, youth meetings to facilitate inclusion in the city, training courses, debates on citizen participation, social, cultural workshops, as well as various other activities on the theme of resilient cities. Furthermore, there have been vibrant debates and public forums centred around citizen participation, encouraging dialogue and collaboration between local authorities and residents to co-create solutions for common issues.

➤ **THE COORDINATION WEBINAR OF THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK**

On 3 October 2023, a webinar on the theme “Local communities: putting democratic resilience at the forefront” brought together National Coordinators of the ELDW and representatives of municipalities and associations to showcase their best practices in organising ELDW activities regarding the main theme of the year.

The webinar began with a presentation by Byrony Rudkin, thematic spokesperson for the ELDW. She notably outlined the updated criteria for the “Partner of the ELDW” title.

This introduction was followed by a presentation on the 2023 edition of the World Forum for Democracy (WFD).

Participants then listened to a video message from Frantisek Brezo, Youth Delegate of the Slovak Republic to the Congress, on youth engagement.

Finally, the municipality of Valongo, the municipality of Edremit, the Association Ville et Communes de Bruxelles (Brulocalis), and the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) presented the activities they have implemented this year to build more resilient cities and communities and increase citizen engagement at local level.

WEBSITE, NETWORK AND TOOLBOX

As in previous years, the ELDW website (<http://www.congress-eldw.eu/en/>) continues 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 the “Partner of the ELDW” title automatically upon submission. Our partners can directly upload and update their profile for requesting the title.

A new feature introduced in 2021 on the homepage is the possibility to grant a limited authorisation for homepage administration to National Coordinators of each member state. National coordinators can now create the profile of municipalities in their countries

and publish their activities on their behalf. National coordinators must register via an online form before they can have publishing access for their respective country. This gives those municipalities and associations which do not speak neither English nor French the opportunity to register for the ELDW and report their activities. It also serves to expand the outreach of the ELDW to more remote parts of Europe.

Besides some other features which facilitate the navigation on the homepage, all participants can now upload photos to illustrate an activity at any time (when publishing an activity but also later) without further validation by the homepage administrator. However, the Congress declines all responsibility for photos uploaded by participants in the European Local Democracy Week initiative and reserves the right to remove them if such action is deemed necessary.

When participants register their activities, they should indicate whether the activity is a "Flagship Event" or not. If this is the case, a small European flag will be added next to this activity at the front.

The post-activity feedback section was removed since it was inefficient and under-used.

➤ **TOOLBOX**

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

Appendix 1: List of registered participants of ELDW 2023

Total: 51 participants including 8 associations

Armenia	The Union of Communities of Armenia
Belgium	Brulocalis (Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels) Commune of Berchem-Sainte-Agathe Commune of Forest Commune of Jette Uccle Municipality
Bosnia and Herzegovina	City of Banja Luka City of Mostar City of Sarajevo Municipality of Trnovo Teslic Municipality
France	ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy)
Germany	Chemnitz
Greece	Agii Anargiri-Kamatero, Alimos, Anogeia, Moschato
Italy	Vicovaro Municipality
Luxembourg	City of Esch-sur-Alzette
Malta	Local Councils' Association
North Macedonia	City of Skopje Municipality of Aerodrom Municipality of Bitola
Norway	Kristiansand Kommune
Portugal	City of Amadora Municipality of Cascais Municipality of Valongo
Romania	Municipality of Ramnicu Valcea
Serbia	City of Loznica Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
Spain	Municipality of Argelaguer Resilience Earth
Türkiye	Ahmetbey, Municipality Bağcılar Municipality Beşiktaş Municipality

	Buca Municipality Büyükçekmece Municipality Çiğli Municipality Edremit Municipality Kadıköy Municipality Kırklareli Municipality Konak Municipality Lüleburgaz Municipality Zeytinburnu Municipality
Ukraine	Fastiv City Territorial Community Kharkiv City Council City of Kyiv Lviv City Council Pokrovsk Territorial Community
United Kingdom	Kırklees Community Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Youth Council

Appendix 2: REPRESENTATION OF COUNTRIES 2012-2023

2023 18 countries	Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2022 19 countries	Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Malta, Morocco, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2021 15 countries	Armenia, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2020 19 countries	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Tunisia, Ukraine
2019 19 countries	Albania, Armenia, Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2018 18 countries	Albania, Armenia, Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2017 20 countries	Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2016 23 countries	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2015 29 countries	Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom

2014 24 countries	Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye, United Kingdom
2013 29 countries	Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
2012 29 countries	Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom

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 46 Member States of the Council of Europe.

Local and regional authorities from the 46 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

 <https://www.congress-eldw.eu/en/>

EN

www.coe.int/congress



The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 46 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 612 elected officials representing more than 130 000 local and regional authorities.