

ENGAGE CITIZENS IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING!

Council of Europe School on Participatory Democracy Tools Sept 2022- March 2023 in the University of Rijeka on Cres Island/ Croatia

Application Deadline: 07/August/2022

The Council of Europe invites practitioners from local authorities and civil society from Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*, who wish to broaden their knowledge of participatory democracy concepts and tools at local level to attend the second Council of Europe School on Participatory Democracy Tools.

The School on Participatory Democracy Tools is organised by the Division of Elections and Participatory Democracy of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the University of Belgrade/Serbia and the University of Rijeka/Croatia. Standards and instruments of the Council of Europe on participatory democracy will be presented by international experts with long-standing experience in the field. An interactive learning environment will provide opportunities to learn about good practice examples, to share experiences and to interact with experts and other practitioners on how to effectively engage citizens in political decision-making. [The first School on Participatory Democracy Tools](#) was organised in Winter 2021/22 with [a one-week training in Tbilisi/Georgia](#) and a closure event in Tirana/Albania.

The training comprises an online introduction meeting, a face-to-face training in the University of Rijeka on Cres Island/Croatia, several follow-up in-depth online trainings and a closure event (tbd).

The **Introduction Meeting** will provide the participants with concepts and values underlying civil participation in political decision-making and share Council of Europe standards and guidelines on civil participation. It will address some of the most prevalent challenges that the participants face in increasing citizen engagement and introduce the agenda for the face-to-face training on Cres Island/Croatia.

At the **School on Participatory Democracy Tools on Cres Island/ Croatia** participants will meet for a training that will combine presentations of concepts, case studies, tools and models for inclusive citizen engagement with interactive group exercises and roundtable discussions. The sessions will cover a variety of approaches to citizen engagement at the local level, strategies for maximising inclusion, exercises for designing public consultations plans, and include toolkits and case studies on a range of themes pertinent to participatory policymaking at the local level, including public space planning and participatory budgeting.

Several tailor-made online follow-up trainings will be offered after the event in Cres to deepen the knowledge of specific tools along specific policy areas.

A **final closure event** will provide space to finalise the learning process and for experience-sharing.

Who can participate?

Public officials (including elected officials) from local authorities and representatives of civil society organisations (CSO) from Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo*. Working language will be English, the participants are required to speak sufficient English to express themselves and share their experience. Participants from the side of government and civil society should be already working or planning to work on shaping or implementing policy decisions where citizen engagement is an important driver of informed, effective, and sustainable policymaking. Participants from an institution and a CSO of the same municipality will have the opportunity to jointly develop a practical strategy to be implemented in their community.

What to expect of the school?

The goal is to create a shared understanding and knowledge of Council of Europe's values and standards on civil participation and relevant tools to be implemented in participants' specific local contexts. (The draft agenda for the Introduction Meeting and the Council of Europe School on Participatory Democracy Tools on Cres Island/Croatia are accessible [here](#)).

Lecturers:

The training cycle will be moderated by Jeff Lovitt, who designed among other the Council of Europe's Winter School on Participatory Tools 2021/22 and the Council of Europe's Participatory Democracy Academy, which has been implemented since 2019 in several Council of Europe member States. He is the author of two Council of Europe books on Civil Participation in Political Decision-Making in the Eastern Partnership countries and is a member of the International Experts Panel of the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

Other experts and authors of Council of Europe tools for fostering civic participation will demonstrate their experience and tools to engage citizens in decision-making processes.

Logistics and costs:

The costs of participation (accommodation and travel) will be covered by the [Council of Europe according to the rules and regulations](#).

Working Language: English**Dates:**

Online induction meeting: 19 September 2022, 9h-12h (CET)

Council of Europe School on Participatory Democracy Tools: 3 -7 October 2022

Training needs assessment: November 2022

Focal group meeting: December 2022

6 online courses: Feb 2023

Closure meeting: March 2023

How to apply?

We invite interested practitioners of local authorities and civil society to fill out this application form ([here](#)) in order to apply for the Council of Europe School. The application deadline is **7 August 2022**. Selected participants will receive written notification and logistical information by 7 September 2022. Contact and information:

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**All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations' Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.*