



L'Esprit d'Aarhus

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

PROTOCOL

Created in 2002 to respond to the first two objectives of the Aarhus Convention, to inform citizens and to ensure that they can participate in decision-making processes, the National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP) is an administrative authority independent from the French Government and Parliament.

Preamble

Noting that there is currently a deep crisis of citizens' confidence towards public institutions,

Conscious of the radicalization of scientific controversies, particularly those concerning environmental issues,

Convinced that the access to information and citizen participation in decision-making processes can help legitimize decisions,

The CNDP wishes to create an informal network on access to information and citizen participation in public decision-making, *L'Esprit d'Aarhus*. While in line with the values promoted by the Aarhus Convention, citizens' access to information concerning the environment and public participation in decision-making processes, this network will not be limited to the countries that signed the convention. It is open to international organizations, countries, regions and major cities.

Goals

This network is composed of the main actors of participatory democracy in international organizations, regions and major cities. It aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Develop and strengthen the culture of citizen participation.
2. Allow the institutions or organizations in charge of promoting access to information and citizen participation in each country, region or major city to be permanently and continuously in touch.
3. To follow-up on the achievements or experiments carried out by the members of the network in order to analyze their successes and failures for the benefit of all.
4. Promote the exchange of good practices of citizen participation and conflict management between members of the network, including the international organizations, countries, regions and cities.
5. Facilitate international cooperation with countries that want to develop citizen participation.

How It Works

In order to facilitate the communication and relations between the different members of the network:

1. The CNDP proposes to develop a website in order to give more visibility to the innovative actions carried out by its members and to help easily identify the different members of the network and facilitate relations between them. This site will also be the main communication tool of the network.
2. Hold an annual meeting organized by a different member in a different country each year.
3. Present a report every three years in order to acknowledge the actions carried out by the network.

Commitments

By agreeing to become members of L'Esprit d'Aarhus, institutions and organizations are committing themselves to:

1. Respect the principles and values promoted by the Aarhus Convention, principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Open Government Partnership.
2. Actively participate in the activities organized within the framework of the network.
3. Broadcast the information concerning the different actions carried out by the members of the network in their countries.
4. Help mentalities evolve by promoting the culture of citizen participation at all levels: international, national and local.
5. Adhere to the editorial charter.

By gathering institutions and organizations that are active at different levels, we will help improve the practices of citizen participation in all countries.

