



# Call for proposals

The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy ([IOPD](#)) is an exchange network of over 1000 cities around the world in which civil society organizations and research centers come together to develop, implement and disseminate experiences on participatory democracy at the local level in order to deepen democracy in the government of cities.

The network was born in 2001 within the framework of the URB-AL program of the European Commission. Since 2006, IOPD has been working in partnership with United Cities and Local Governments ([UCLG](#)) and is currently contributing with innovative knowledge content at the service of local governments in the field of participatory democracy.

IOPD is currently chaired by the City of Grenoble, France, where its 21st conference will be held, from December 7 to 10, 2022.

On that occasion, the IOPD is launching a call for proposals from its members, but also from any person or group with a particular interest in participatory democracy and who wants to share their work and experiences at its international conference in 2022.

## 2022 IOPD Conference Theme

### Take action !

*Towards a renewed democracy in the face of the ecological, health and social crisis*



Faced with alerts from the scientific community, NGOs, civil society, and social and political movements on the urgency of dealing with the problem of climate and the increase in inequalities, local governments cannot act without a partnership with all of these committed actors to bring about a profound transformation of our political decision-making models, our methods of action to fight against global warming as well as those to broadly involve residents in public decisions.

#### Encourage political and civic action

Today it is not enough to create institutionalized tools allowing residents to be more or less associated with the making of public decision-making. The major challenge of our local governments is to create environments conducive to the action of inhabitants to enable them to take charge of questions, problems, commons, and spaces, in order to **participate directly in political processes**.

Democracy is translated into everyday life forms in which citizens act as equals to **build a common destiny together**. As such, the initiatives of inhabitants are numerous, ranging from self-managed housing to shared gardens, from networks of responsible and local consumption to common and collective projects. The imagination of our fellow citizens is rich and we must trust them to build greener, more united and fairer cities and territories, to build more inclusive democracies.

Faced with the environmental crisis, climate change and distrust of our social and political structures, it is imperative that **elected officials and citizens work together**. Our institutions must adapt to accommodate more initiatives from residents and our public policies must open up to allow everyone to build together. To repair our territories together, we have no other choice.

This transformation should not however be considered as an intention that will receive unanimous agreement and without resistance. **Democracy is made up of conflicts, of contradictory interests, but also of agreements and compromises**. Denying conflicts does not make them disappear, in practice, moving towards a more inclusive democracy cannot be done without welcoming these conflicts, without taking them into account. They can be generators of new energies, new projects and initiatives, new forms of acting,



continually challenging us, they allow us to open up bridges and sites for transforming our practices, our habits, our ways of doing.

The spirit of the 21st IOPD conference is to encourage **open dialogues and to compare experiences** from various horizons to generate spaces allowing the emergence of new forms of passage to action, new forms of acting in the face of major challenges facing our societies. Thus the main theme proposed to the network, during its last general assembly, is that of **democracy in action, inclusive democracy, and democracy of doing**, because it is time to act to accelerate transitions.

The IOPD conference in Grenoble must be the political space to advocate for this opening of our cities and territories to citizen's initiative, to common action, in common, to further develop the power to act and to emancipation.

Time is running out, it is time to act! This central idea will be broken down into **3 main themes**:

**1-Ecological transition and climate-related challenges** as issues to reactivate deliberation and citizen contribution. Indeed, society is taking on climate issues more and more and massive mobilizations show the existing social interest in the subject. The experiences of citizens' conventions, local IPCCs, methods of collectively greening cities are multiplying and extending the field of debate around ecology and democracy. This will be an opportunity in Grenoble to take stock of these experiences, to also share the results of the citizens' convention for the climate which will work throughout 2022 on our territory, and also the moment to collectively say the importance of increase efforts to create, with city dwellers, ecosystems where we can "live well" together. For the ecological transition to succeed, it is therefore particularly important to clearly pose this social and political debate. If it is not posed, the ecological transition risks failing not for technical reasons but for reasons of social acceptability.

**2. Social justice, fight against inequalities and inclusiveness:** the transformations that are required of our societies in today's world cannot be achieved without ensuring a fair and shared common base. The transformations to be made will not be possible if we do not find ways to define what is the basis for everyone to meet their needs, so as to live a dignified and comfortable life. In addition, the question of how we ensure that we are increasingly inclusive in the way we make decisions will be addressed. How we can all participate in



public life and debate; especially when it comes to important societal choices, define what are the right needs of each, and therefore which activities are essential to meet these needs or even the social consequences of public choice.

**3. Youth, hopes and commitments for democratic renewal.** Last but not least, come young people and their hope on which our expectations are based. The political disenchantment of young people observed at the level of institutional participation can be put into perspective with the democratic “re-enchantment” through the greater investment of young people in modes of participation outside traditional political institutions. While they seem to divest from partisan engagement, they nevertheless play a catalytic role in other democratic arenas to defend causes or intervene in public debate.

Eager to give meaning to their actions, committed and on the move, young people are at the center of change. Levers and engines of social transformations. During this conference, we want to show the many ways that young people have taken over the political and social field. Through their mobilization, initiatives and modes of action, the new generations challenge institutions and societal models.

We are looking for sessions and testimonials with inspiring content.

### **Rules for proposing a session or a testimony of a participatory experience**

To submit a session or a testimonial sharing proposal, please complete and submit the [form](#) before June 26, 2022.

Proposals can be written in French, Spanish, Portuguese or English. **We suggest that you write a summary of the activity in French or English to facilitate the work of the selection committee.**

Note that the expected duration of each activity is 60 minutes maximum.

For more information please contact [oidp@grenoble.fr](mailto:oidp@grenoble.fr)



### **Evaluation of proposals**

The choice of proposals for sessions and testimonials will be made by an international committee according to their relation with the theme of the conference, the relevance of the proposed approach and geographical balance. The selected proposals will be confirmed at the end of July 2022.