



## Mayor of Barcelona

April 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

Barcelona is a Mediterranean city, both open and cosmopolitan, with a clear international vocation that has found its expression, among many other ways, through the choice of the city as the seat of a wide range of international organisations, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis.

It is also our honour to hold and operate the General Secretariat of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), a responsibility that is framed within our firm commitment to work towards improving democratic quality and promoting new forms of open government for our citizens.

In this sense, our city is currently developing a citizen participation ecosystem, specifically expressed through the creation of the new regulations on citizen participation, the purpose of which are to expedite the intervention of citizens in the generation and implementation of public policies, as well as the development of digital infrastructures that serve as a complement to face-to-face channels of participation.

In view of the above, as both the Mayor of Barcelona and, this year, President of the IOPD, it gives me the greatest pleasure to invite all of the different local governments and organisations that form part of the Observatory to take part in the 18th International Conference, which is to be held in our city on 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

Political leaders and technicians working in public institutions at a local level, along with experts and representatives of civil society, will be coming together to debate and share our experiences in relation to the improvement and strengthening of democracy in our municipalities. This year, the Conference will be dealing with a series of important themes, such as citizen initiatives, direct democracy and the development of inclusive participatory ecosystems that are aimed at enabling citizens to jointly exercise their right to political participation in the local and metropolitan spheres. During these days, we will also be analysing how, from a participatory point of view, we can apply global agendas, such as the New Urban Agenda or Sustainable Development Goals at a local level.

I am convinced that the 18th IOPD Conference will provide an excellent opportunity for us to make progress towards our shared goal of building societies that are fairer, more participatory and more democratic.

In the hope that we will be able to count on your attendance, I convey my warmest regards.

Ada Colau  
Mayor of Barcelona  
President of the IOPD

**Ada Colau Ballano**