



## **IV International Conference**

### **International Observatory of Participatory Democracy**

**November 11 – 14, 2004. Buenos Aires, Argentina**

### **Final Declaration**

#### **It was stated that:**

- The IV International Conference from the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (OIDP), celebrated in Buenos Aires during the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 2004, has marked a consolidation moment related to the organisation and functioning of this network;
- During this three years, our network had become a strong and active instance, that integrates municipalities and local governments, and also entities of civil society that are interested on stimulate processes of citizen participation, studying its potentialities and spreading its comparative advantages. During this time we had achieved the aims that had guides us initially;
- More than 200 members participate of our network, from those 140 are local governments. Our next horizon is to consolidate our capacities as an international reference space to spread, exchange experiences, reflect, study, promote and to get deep on the Participatory Democracy practices;
- The collaborator members constitute a very significant portion of the total associated. Those organisations have their identities, aims, and a possibility to contribute with important elements to OIDP's discussion.
- On Lille's Conference (2003) we agreed that there are no models of Participatory Democracy and that each experience originates and develops on its local context that have influence over it. We had also agreed over the aims that guide our practices: "participatory processes should necessarily lead towards achieving higher levels of equality, empowered citizenship, greater legitimisation of and trust on public authorities, and greater efficiency in public policy";



- With the learning about this variety but also common aims, and with the intention to get deeper on the practical and theoretical exchange, a new project had been promoted - "Local Observatories of Participatory Democracy", that had received the support of European Union, and whose first agreements and launching happened also in Buenos Aires;
- The methodological advances that this new project will produce, will allow that the cities in OIDP have better conditions to measure and evaluate the development degree and also the quality level of their participatory experiences to give opinion about themselves experiences aiming a higher level of citizen's protagonism;
- The synergy between the new project, whose partners had agreed on sustain and stimulate the OIDP, and the International Observatory will add more value and projection to the network and its collective. The continuity of the relation between the OIDP and the beginning of OLDP's activities represents a guarantee of future of both of them;
- Finally, it is of great relevance the decentralised development of the conference. Certainly, to take our works and discussions to the concrete scenes of participation is coherent with the focus of our work.

### **Reasserting that:**

- The bet from the Observatory for the participation as an instrument to strengthen the democracy and to stimulate the practise of the citizenship protagonist on the discussion, drawing and implementation of public politics.
- To integrate the people on the decision making process implicates new challenges, new institutional demands and also new mechanisms and ways to practise the citizenship;
- The municipality is the space since this challenge must be faced. It is in the cities where the opportunity to recreate the public management through the active, critical and continued participation starts. It is in the cities where the meeting between public management and population is possible;
- The quantity and the quality of the participatory experiences allow us to see with optimism the advances and achievements to get deeper on our proposal of Participatory Democracy;



- The bet for international co-operation between the cities and local governments is a way to support this co-work. Cities that articulate facing the hegemonic pressures of globalisation and create new institutions and new dialogue spaces, exchange and solidarity aiming to be on the best condition to defeat those challenges.

### **It was agreed:**

- With the changes on the organisation;
- That the Presidency will be held by the city of Donosti and with a new "**Co-ordinator Committee**" integrated by the Spanish cities Barcelona, Madrid, Vitoria Gasteiz, Bilbao, Barberà do Valles, Córdoba, Vilanova i la Getru, Santa Coloma de Gramanet and by the Diputació de Barcelona. In Argentina by Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Villa Gessel. By the Brazilian cities of Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre and Recife. The French cities of Saint Denis, Conseil General du Val du Marne and Nanterre. And by Cuenca (Ecuador), La Paz (Bolivia), El Bosque (Chile) , Vila Real de Santo Antonio (Portugal) co-ordinated by the Technical Secretary that is held by Barcelona;
- That we should get deeper on the integration of the actual members collaborators and also the future ones, so we can optimise the qualitative contribution that they can add to the OIDP's activities. We should stimulate the mutual information transfer about Research Programs, promotion or technical support developed by each organisation on themes related with the OIDP's work, and also, a technical support to the design and management of the OIDP's data base.
- That the next Conference, in 2005, will take place in the city of Donosti.

### **And we compromise to:**

- Support and realise the experience reflection, the analysis, the proposition and the critical review, as we believe that those are basic elements to accomplish our aims.
- Promote co-ordinated research projects, co-publications and technical support between the collaborators members and the active partners of OIDP.
- Support the theoretical reflection about citizen participation and the information systematisation of experiences that are developed in OIDP's field and its associated.



- Search the objectives of the Local Observatories of Participatory Democracy, as also work in the relation between OI DP-OLDP;
- Settle our spread and extension interest, throughout a larger number of cities and collaborators
- Collaborate with the new cities association "United Cities and Local Governments", without losing our personality and helping with our experience obtained during this three years, aiming a cohesion and a sum of efforts, working to avoid overlapping actions;
- Keep our efforts on the strengthening of concepts, experiences and valuation of Participatory Democracy.
- Presenting to the members a integration proposal over the participation of the collaborators, to be elaborated consulting the actual collaborators;
- Include, on the next Conference a special discussion and exchange session between collaborators.
- The Co-ordinator Committee, the Presidency and the Technical Secretary compromise to start working since today to the realisation of the V conference on the city of Donosti.

Buenos Aires, November, 2004

We appreciate and are grateful to the city that had received us.