



**WORKING GROUP
ON e-DEMOCRACY**

WORKING PROGRAMME 2015

Coordinator: Mr. Juan Pablo Durán Sánchez

President of the Parliament of Andalusia

1.- INTRODUCTION

At the Plenary Assembly of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE) held in Santiago de Compostela between 6 and 8 of November 2014, the President of the Parliament of Andalusia, Mr. Manuel Gracia Navarro, assumed the responsibility and commitment to be the coordinator, for the third consecutive year, of the CARLE Working Group on e-Democracy.

e-Democracy, also called Digital Democracy, is about using the means and tools offered by information and communication technologies (ICTs), and the Internet in particular, to disseminate knowledge of the work carried out by public institutions and to facilitate the participation of all citizens in democratic processes.

In fact, it is a matter of promoting and fostering citizens' interaction with the public institutions and public authorities that represent them. Such interaction is based on the principles of access to information, transparency, accountability, participation and active listening.

In the current context, where disaffection and mistrust of citizens towards public institutions is growing every day, e-Democracy and Transparency are two elements inherent in the 21st century Democracy and they stand as a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between European citizens and their institutions, and so recover their interest and trust.

The Regional Legislative Assemblies are one of the most immediate bodies to meet the citizens' needs and demands. Therefore, it is necessary to create and enhance an Open Parliament that would report on its work under the principle of Transparency and encourage and foster the active participation of the citizens when it comes to taking legislative decisions affecting their immediate environment.

Well aware of working in a constantly changing field, the CARLE Working Group on e-Democracy aims to establish a basis for and maintain its progress towards a more participatory and transparent democracy within European Regional Legislative Assemblies, as an indispensable means to strengthen our democratic system. The methodology for achieving such a goal includes research, analysis, sharing of good practices, consultation and implementation of Transparency and e-Democracy through the recommendations and proposals to be submitted to the CARLE Plenary Assembly.

2.- BACKGROUND

The President of the Parliament of Andalusia took over the coordination of the Working Group on e-Democracy for the first time at the CARLE Plenary Assembly held in Extremadura on 29 and 30 November 2012.

The context then was of extreme sensitivity. On the one hand, the effects of the economic, social and political crisis had stretched the trust of the citizens in their public representatives to the limit. On the other hand, most

European Regional Legislative Assemblies had just started to use ICTs as a tool to inform the citizenship of their work, mainly through websites and social networks.

Over the years 2013 and 2014, the Working Group on e-Democracy has both witnessed and promoted the progress made in participatory democracy by European Parliaments.

Let us point out the contribution of the European Regional Legislative Assemblies of Brussels-Capital (Belgium), Walloon Region (Belgium), Wallonia-Brussels (Belgium), Styria (Austria), Åland Islands (Finland), Abruzzi (Italy), Veneto (Italy), Sicily (Italy), the Azores (Portugal), Extremadura (Spain), Galicia (Spain), Principality of Asturias (Spain), Murcia (Spain), Salzburg (Austria), Molise (Italy), Valle d'Aosta (Italy), Umbria (Italy), and Wales (United Kingdom), which were part of the working group during the previous editions under the coordination of the Parliament of Andalusia (Spain).

Among the work carried out so far, we should highlight two studies on the situation of e-Democracy in European regional Parliaments, which have served to test and follow the implementation of the Information, e-Consultation, e-Participation, and e-Voting phases. The seminars held at the Andalusian Parliament in June 2013 and 2014 have also proved very fruitful as regards the sharing of good practice and expert advice.

The reports and conclusions of the work carried out are available on the CARLE (www.calrenet.eu) and on the Parliament of Andalusia websites (www.parlamentodeandalucia.es).

3.- OBJECTIVES FOR 2015

The objectives of the Working Group on e-Democracy for the year 2015 are as follows:

- 1) To foster the Transparency and Accountability of European Regional Parliaments based upon the principles of access to public information and active publicity.
- 2) To implement the tools of e-Democracy in European Regional Parliaments, and establish minimum elements (information on the web, social networks, etc.) to be taken into account by all CARLE Assemblies.
- 3) To share proposals and projects for good practice in e-Democracy as a means to progress towards a more participatory and collaborative Democracy that would meet the citizens' demands and interests.
- 4) To provide advice to European Regional Parliaments on request, regarding the implementation, development, and management of e-Democracy and Transparency tools.

- 5) To set up collaboration networks with universities, study centres, and experts to deepen the knowledge, research, and implementation of new channels and tools to improve communication with and participation of the citizens in the CARLE Assemblies.

- 6) To enhance the visibility of CARLE through the website and social networks by a collaborative action, under the leadership of the CARLE Presidency, and with the contributions of other European Regional Parliaments.

- 7) To submit a proposal for a strategy on e-Democracy to the CARLE Plenary Assembly, with a focus on Transparency and Participation, based on the studies and meetings of the Working Group.

4.- WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

COUNTRY	ASSEMBLY	MEMBER
SPAIN	PARLAMENTO DE ANDALUCIA (Coord.)	JUAN PABLO DURÁN SÁNCHEZ President (Coord.)
AUSTRIA	PARLIAMENT OF STYRIA	FRANZ MAJCEN President
AUSTRIA	PARLIAMENT OF SALZBURG	BRIGITTA PALLAUF President
BELGIUM	FLEMISH PARLIAMENT (VLAANS)	JULIE CLEMENT Director Communication & External Relations

BELGIUM	PARLIAMENT WALLON	ANDRÉ ANTOINE President
BELGIUM	PARLIAMENT OF THE FRENCH FEDERATION WALLONIA- BRUSSELS	PHILIPPE COURARD President
SPAIN	JUNTA GENERAL PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS	PEDRO SANJURJO GONZÁLEZ President
SPAIN	PARLAMENTO DE CANARIAS	ANTONIO CASTRO CORDOBEZ President
SPAIN	PARLAMENTO DE EXTREMADURA	FERNANDO MANZANO President
SPAIN	PARLAMENTO DE GALICIA	PILAR ROJO NOGUERA President
SPAIN	ASAMBLEA REGIONAL DE MURCIA	FRANCISCO CELDRÁN VIDAL President
FINLAND	PARLIAMENT OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS	BRITT LUNDBERG President
ITALY	REGIONAL COUNCIL OF ABRUZZO	GIUSEPPE DI PANGRAZIO President
ITALY	REGIONAL COUNCIL OF LOMBARDY	RAFFAELE CATTANEO President
ITALY	REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MOLISE	VINCENZO NIRO President

ITALY	REGIONAL COUNCIL OF PIEDMONT	MAURO LAUS President
ITALY	REGIONAL COUNCIL OF UMBRIA	EROS BREGA President
PORTUGAL	LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE AZORES	SANDRA COSTA General Secretary

5.- LINES OF ACTION

The CARLE Working Group on e-Democracy will focus on the following lines of action for 2015:

1. Implementation of the Public Transparency principles in European Regional Parliaments.

Considering that the Transparency of public institutions is one of the axes of e-Democracy, and one of the main demands of European citizens, the objective is to analyse and quantify the implementation of Public Transparency in the European Regional Parliaments which are members of CARLE.

To this end, the Working Group will carry out a study on the degree of Transparency of the European Regional Legislative Assemblies through a specific questionnaire which will analyse the legislation on Transparency in European regions, the presence of Transparency measures in the

regulations of European Regional Parliaments, and the application of the regulations regarding Transparency by such means as access to public information or active publicity (communication, management, personnel tools, etc.).

The objective is to outline the shape of Transparency in European Regional Legislative Assemblies, to have a basic document to follow up this issue over the next few years, and to provide advice or guidance to European Regional Parliaments starting to implement Transparency and e-Democracy measures.

2. Follow-up of the implementation and evolution of e-Democracy in European Regional Parliaments.

Following the example of the 2013 and 2014 editions, this year, a new “Report on Good Practice and Innovative Projects for e-Democracy in the CARLE Parliaments” will be drawn up.

A questionnaire will be sent to all European Regional Legislative Assemblies members of CARLE to quantify the implementation of e-Democracy in their parliaments, with a focus on the Information, e-Consultation, e-Participation, and e-Voting phases.

The answers to the questionnaires will be compiled and processed by the Andalusian Parliament and the preliminary results and conclusions of the report will be presented during the meeting of the Working Group on e-Democracy to be held in Seville next June, so that the rest of the group

members may bring in their contributions. The final result, together with the study on Transparency, will be presented at the CARLE Plenary Assembly.

3. Creation of inter-parliamentary and academic networks for sharing good practices in Transparency and e-Democracy.

Beyond the task of the Working Group, the aim is to set up collaboration networks that will last over time within CARLE, and will allow further and deeper Transparency and e-Democracy, two major elements of the 21st century Democracy.

3.1. Inter-parliamentary collaboration network.

The goal is to achieve the networking of the European Regional Parliaments which, this year, are taking part in the Working Group on e-Democracy, as a first step towards creating collaboration networks between the CARLE Parliaments in the coming years.

The aim of this inter-parliamentary network is to create a common space for sharing good practice and working documents, and/or for communicating problems or doubts, among other issues. Thus, the parliaments could provide advice each other, and facilitate mutual learning.

To this end, collaboration networks will be put in place between the professionals responsible for each area involved in the e-Democracy and Transparency processes:

- Cabinet of the Presidency, with the head of the Cabinet as a reference.
- Legal Counsel, with the head of all the Parliament or Assembly Counsellors as a reference.
- Communication, Social networks and Participation
- Transparency

3.2. Collaboration network with the universities and experts in the field.

To create a continuous link with University research groups and experts in the field in order to collaborate in the implementation and development of the e-Democracy techniques, through collaboration agreements, seminars, videoconferences, etc.

3.3. Meeting of the Working Group on e-Democracy

All the members of the Working Group on e-Democracy will share their work during the seminar to be held at the Andalusian Parliament next June. As in previous meetings, the work reports will be presented, proposals for good practices will be submitted, and experts in the field will make their contribution.

4. Proposal for strategies to recover citizens' trust in public institutions, specifically in regional parliaments; to foster participation and involve young people in democratic processes.

Based on the conclusions of the above studies and of the shared good practices, a final document will be drawn up with recommendations and/or strategies to meet one of the main objectives of the Working Group: to recover the citizens' trust in public institutions, and particularly in European Regional Parliaments.

A document including, in this regard, the current strengths and weaknesses of European Regional Legislative Assemblies which would offer concrete proposals and ideas to improve interaction with the citizens, and their participation in the institutions and, particularly, to attract the youngest people to democratic processes.

That document, together with the above-mentioned documents on Transparency and e-Democracy, will be presented as a joint report by the Working Group on e-Democracy at the CARLE Plenary Assembly

6.- ACTION SCHEDULE

The action schedule of the CARLE Working Group on e-Democracy is as follows:

8 November 2014: Appointment of Mr. Manuel Gracia Navarro, president of the Andalusian Parliament, as coordinator, for the third consecutive year, of the CARLE Working Group on e-Democracy for the 2015 Plenary Assembly of Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

Until 16 February 2015: Incorporation of members into the group.

From March to May 2015: development of the proposed lines of action with the implementation of the collaboration networks between parliaments and the sending of the questionnaires on Transparency and e-Democracy (April 2015).

September 2015: Meeting of the Working Group and seminar on e-Democracy at the Andalusian Parliament, located in Seville (Spain), where the reports on Transparency, e-Democracy, and good practice will be presented.

October/November 2015: Presentation of the final report by the Working Group on e-Democracy at the CARLE Plenary Assembly.