



**Report on Good Practice and  
innovative projects on e-Democracy  
in European Regional Legislative Assemblies**

---

**CALRE Working Group on e-Democracy  
2015 Edition**

**Coordinated by Mr. Juan Pablo Durán Sánchez,  
President of the Andalusian Parliament**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Why a report on e-Democracy?</i>	4
<i>Methodology</i>	4
<b>Part I. Indicators for the Analysis of the Evolution of e-Democracy</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>e-Information</i>	8
<i>e-Consultation</i>	11
<i>e-Participation</i>	12
<i>e-Voting</i>	16
<i>Attracting young people to politics</i>	17
<b>Part II. Evaluation of good Practice in e-Democracy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Part III. Initiatives and Innovative Projects in e-Democracy</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>41</b>

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, public institutions in general and regional institutions in particular are undergoing a deep transformation in the field of management and governance due to continuous innovation in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

This means not only the implementation and development of new management models, but also a new relationship with the citizens. This represents a leap from the traditional model of the representative Democracy towards an open Democracy, favouring both the direct participation of the citizens in the institutions, and Active Listening between representatives and the represented, as ICTs have eliminated space and time barriers.

A process where the concept of e-Democracy, also called Digital Democracy, represents the cornerstone of Open Democracy, using ICTs to publicise the work carried out by the public institutions and to promote the citizens' participation in democratic processes.

## ***Why a report on e-Democracy?***

Today, in a situation in which public alienation from and mistrust of public institutions increases every day, e-Democracy and Public Transparency together represent a unique opportunity to bring European citizens closer to their institutions, thereby regaining their interest and trust.

The Regional Legislative Assemblies are one of the most immediate partners to address the citizens' needs and demands. Therefore, it is necessary to set up and promote an Open Parliament which facilitates and fosters the citizens' active participation in legislative decisions concerning their most immediate environment.

Being aware that we are facing a field in continuous transformation, one of the objectives of the CALRE Working Group on e-Democracy is to analyse and monitor the implementation and evolution of the different phases of e-Democracy (*e-Information, e-Consultation, e-Participation and e-Voting*) at the CALRE parliaments and assemblies.

For this reason, in its 2015 edition, the lines of action of the Working Group include the drawing up of a new *Report on Good Practice and Innovative Projects on e-Democracy in European Regional Legislative Assemblies*. This report, like the studies carried out in the 2013 and 2014 editions, will offer a snapshot of e-Democracy and serve as reference for its development at the CALRE assemblies.

## ***Methodology***

The report on good practice and innovative projects in e-democracy at the European Regional Legislative Assemblies has been drawn up out of the answers to a questionnaire sent to the CALRE Parliaments and Assemblies.

The study maintains, in its third edition, the same criteria as the analysis carried out in 2013 and 2014. Due to the preparation of a specific report on the *Implementation of the Principles of Public Transparency in CALRE*

*Assemblies*, the questions and indicators on the information related to assembly members have been removed and included in the report on Transparency.

The type of questionnaire is very similar to that of the two previous editions used to assess objectively the implementation and evolution of the e-Democracy markers in European Regional Parliaments. However, in order to examine in detail certain aspects of this issue, new evaluation indicators have been introduced, especially those on the use of Social Networks, which contribute to define the final image on the implementation of e-Democracy at CALRE assemblies.

The questionnaire and subsequent report consist of three differentiated blocks. The first is focused on the indicators for the analysis of the evolution of e-Democracy, i.e. *e-Information, e-Consultation, e-Participation, e-Voting and measures to attract young people to politics*.

The second analytical block presents the evaluation of good e-Democracy practice by means of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the measures used to encourage and promote e-Democracy in all its phases.

Lastly, there is a third block in which regional parliaments and assemblies which have taken part in the study are invited to share their innovative projects and initiatives in the field of e-Democracy.

The questionnaires were sent by e-mail to all of the CALRE assemblies and parliaments in early April 2015 and the responses were received during the second quarter of 2015.

A total of 25 regional parliaments and assemblies from six European countries responded to the request for collaboration with the CALRE Working Group on e-Democracy study. This is a 20% increase in participation compared to 2014 (21 participating parliaments) and 2013 (22 parliaments).

The following assemblies took part in the preparation of this report: Abruzzo (Italy), Andalusia (Spain), Asturias (Spain), the Azores (Portugal), Calabria (Italy), the Canary Islands (Spain), Cantabria (Spain), Extremadura

(Spain), Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), Lombardy (Italy), Molise (Italy), Upper Austria (Austria), the Basque Country (Spain), Piedmont (Italy), Parliament of the German-speaking Community (Belgium), Emilie-Romagna (Italy), La Rioja (Spain), Saxony (Germany), Salzburg (Austria), Schleswig Holstein (Germany), Styria (Austria), Tuscany (Italy), Voralberg (Austria), Walloon Region (Belgium) and Wallonia-Brussels (Belgium).

The results from the study, following the order of the analytical blocks of the questionnaire, are shown below.

## PART I. Indicators for the Analysis of the Evolution of e-Democracy

The analysis of the implementation and evolution of e-Democracy in the European Regional Legislative Assemblies has been carried out through the review of five phases:

**e-Information**, on the information related to the legislative and institutional activity that the parliaments and assemblies share in a proactive manner through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

**e-Consultation**, on the means available for the citizens to be informed and to request information from the assemblies.

**e-Participation**, on the mechanisms which facilitate the citizens' participation in parliamentary activity and the decision-making process, as well as the relationship between the citizens and their representatives in the institutions.

**e-Voting**, on the use of ICTs to promote and facilitate voting.

**Attracting young people to politics**, measures to favour knowledge about and participation in the institutions among young people.

When analysing the statistical results of this part of the study, it should be noted that some parliaments and assemblies that did not participate in previous editions of the study have answered the 2015 questionnaire, whereas others that took part in the 2013 and 2014 editions are missing from the 2015 report.

## e-Information

The regional parliaments' and assemblies' websites are their best tool to ensure compliance with all of the indicators evaluated in the *e-Information* phase.

Being well aware of the relevance of ICTs and the Internet in order to keep the citizens informed about their activity, all the assemblies surveyed continuously update their website, although some are more active than others when it comes to modernising the image of the website to make its contents more attractive to citizens.

In the general information section of the website, the indicators show a slight improvement. **Ninety-six percent of the assemblies offer information on their website about the Chamber and its functions** and 87 percent include a table of contents to facilitate browsing and access to information. Likewise, **the work of CALRE gains relevance on the assembly websites, since three out of four websites include information about the organisation.**

General information			
	2013	2014	2015
General information on the Chamber and its functions on the website	95.45%	95.24%	<b>96%</b>
Table of contents	77.27%	85.71%	<b>87,5%</b>
FAQ section	18.18%	19.05%	<b>20%</b>
Official Bulletin on the website	63.64%	66.67%	<b>54%</b>
Statistics on the number visits to the website	81.82%	80.95%	<b>71%</b>
Links to other regional assemblies	68.18	71.43%	<b>76%</b>
Link to the CALRE website	72.73%	66.67%	<b>75%</b>

Table 1

Regarding parliamentary activity, the assemblies maintain the same level of e-Information as in previous editions, over 80 percent, although a fall can be observed in the generation of statistics on persons following the plenary sessions.

<b>Parliamentary Debates</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Schedule of the plenary sessions on the website	100%	95.24%	<b>100%</b>
Online webcast of the plenary sessions	77.27%	95.24%	<b>92%</b>
Video archive library of the plenary sessions	72.73%	85.71%	<b>80%</b>
Record of the plenary sessions (transcribed text)	100%	95.24%	<b>100%</b>
Statistics on persons following the plenary sessions on the website	36.36%	66.67%	<b>44%</b>

**Table 2**

However, the indicators on information related to legislation and parliamentary commissions have decreased.

<b>Legislation and Parliamentary Commissions</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
List of approved regulations	95.45%	95.24%	<b>88%</b>
Subject index on legislation	63.64%	52.38%	<b>64%</b>
List of regulations currently being processed	77.27%	85.71%	<b>80%</b>
Record of the sessions of the Commission	77.27%	80.95%	<b>64%</b>
Online webcast of the sessions of the Commission	36.36%	52.38%	<b>36%</b>

**Table 3**

As a novelty in the 2015 study, the assemblies were asked about the provision of information about the parliamentary working groups which, as can be observed in the statistics, are paid less attention than the rest of the parliamentary activity. Only 36 percent of the assemblies publish information on the working groups.

<b>Working Groups</b>	
Reports of Working Group Sessions	<b>36%</b>
Online webcast of Working Group Sessions	<b>12%</b>

Table 4

It is furthermore worth noting that **all parliaments and assemblies promote initiatives in what we call Open Parliament, by organising activities other than those related to their legislative functions**, such as seminars, exhibitions, conferences, etc. These activities also provide publicity through the online broadcasting of the events in 64 percent of the cases.

<b>Open Parliament Initiatives</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Organisation of activities other than legislative functions (seminars, exhibitions, conferences, etc.)	n.d.	n.d.	<b>100%</b>
Online broadcasting of other types of event	45.45%	71.43%	<b>64%</b>

Table 5

## e-Consultation

Before analysing the *e-consultation* indicators, we should point out that compared to the 2013 and 2014 reports, the questions from the citizens have been removed from this phase of e-Democracy and are now included in the e-Participation phase, together with items on e-mail consultation, which were previously part of the e-Participation phase.

**Sixty-four percent of the assemblies allow subscriptions to the contents of their website through RSS**, which represents slight progress compared to 2014 and doubles the 2013 figure.

Furthermore, e-mail consulting has grown substantially. **Ninety-two percent of the parliaments facilitate contact by e-mail with the assembly and its services**. In addition, six out of ten have a specific service or staff to address citizens' consultations this way. It is a significant step forward in this respect compared to the two previous editions.

Means of e-Consultation			
	2013	2014	2015
RSS Subscription to the website	31.82%	61.90%	<b>64%</b>
Contact by e-mail	40.91%	52.38%	<b>92%</b>
Staff to address citizens' consultations	n.d.	n.d.	<b>60%</b>

Table 6

## e-Participation

*e-Participation* is one of the cornerstones of e-Democracy. ICTs have been instrumental in eliminating obstacles of space and time, in favouring interaction between representatives and the represented and involving the citizens in the institutions beyond the exercise of voting.

**Sixty-four percent of the assemblies have the means to foster the citizens' participation in the parliamentary procedures.** It can either be through questions from the citizens at plenary sessions (included in e-Consultation in previous reports), or Popular Legislative Initiatives (included in the e-Voting phase in previous editions) or through the intervention of social agents in the preparation of laws and other regulations.

Likewise, Social Networks appear as a response to the need for immediate interaction and communication between the citizens and the institutions and their representatives.

However, the development and implementation of such a system requires a few comments, as shown by the data below.

On the one hand, assemblies work to encourage the citizens' participation in the institutions, while on the other, the mechanisms to achieve this objective can be improved and the level of participation and involvement of the citizens is low, according to the parliaments surveyed.

Thus, **only 28 percent of the assemblies allow their citizens to send questions to the plenary sessions** and only 18 percent of them have made a space available on their website to this purpose. The commonest formula is that assembly members ask the question in the name of the inquiring citizen. Although the number of parliaments offering this option is negligible, significant progress can be observed compared to 2013 and 2014.

<b>Participation of citizens in parliamentary procedures: Questions from citizens and Popular Legislative Initiatives</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Questions from citizens at Plenary sessions	4.55%	0%	<b>28%</b>
Website space available for questions from citizens	27.27%	38.10%	<b>18%</b>
Concept of Popular Legislative Initiative (PLI) envisaged	68.18	85.71%	<b>80%</b>
Website space available for Popular Legislative Initiative	9.09%	14.29%	<b>16%</b>
Online collection of signatures for PLI	0%	0%	<b>8%</b>

Table 7

In the case of the **Popular Legislative Initiative (PLI)**, **80 percent of parliaments envisage this concept in their regulations**, the requisites being the collection of 1 to 150,000 signatures for the initiative to go ahead and be presented at the Plenary Assembly.

It can be asserted that the assemblies surveyed do not promote the proposal and development of PLIs through their website. Only 16 percent have a specific web space to present PLIs and scarcely 8 percent include the online collection of signatures.

It is the same as regards both the participation of citizens in the institutions through opinion surveys, available in 12 percent of the cases, and online forums (20 percent).

However, the parliaments using these mechanisms for participation maintain that their impact and outreach is minimal, since they do not raise interest among the citizens.

On the other hand, **20 percent of the assemblies encourage communication with assembly members via chat or videoconferencing with the citizens**, using Skype, Hangout, Facetime and Google+.

<b>Participation of the citizens in parliamentary procedures: <i>Online communication and citizen contributions</i></b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Online opinion surveys	9.09%	14.9%	<b>12%</b>
Online forums for citizens' participation	9.09%	23.81%	<b>20%</b>
Proposal of issues for discussion in forums from the citizens	9.09%	9.52%	<b>5%</b>
Citizen contributions to current legislation	18.18%	52.38%	<b>37%</b>
Online communication between assembly members and the citizens	27.27%	38.10%	<b>20%</b>
Citizen hearings in the commissions	63.64%	76.19%	<b>72%</b>

Table 8

### ***Social networks***

Special mention should be made of the use of Social Networks (SN) by European Regional Legislative Assemblies to open a direct line of communication with the citizens, whether by direct allusion or mention.

Despite the widespread use of social networks both by the represented citizens and their representatives, a certain degree of reservation can be noted in the institutions when having to apply this means of interaction with the citizens.

Thus, **a little over half of the assemblies have an account in some of the most popular Social Networks: Facebook (56 percent), Twitter (50%) and YouTube (44%), of which 75 percent have opened their accounts over the past three years.**

There is also a token presence of the institutions (10 percent) on other Social Networks: Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr, Foursquare, Pinterest, Medium and Vimeo.

**Thirty-six percent of the parliaments have specific staff for the management of the Social Networks** and 32 percent have a guide for the use of Social Networks.

The following and activity on Social Networks is very uneven among the assemblies. On Facebook, some assemblies have less than one hundred followers, while others exceed 11,800 and the number of publications varies from 8 to 400 posts per month. The same is true of Twitter, with followers numbering between 4 and 8,400, and between 10 and 1,200 tweets per month.

<b>Social Networks</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Institutional Facebook account	40.91%	61.90%	<b>56%</b>
Institutional Twitter account	50%	57.14%	<b>60%</b>
Institutional YouTube account	31.82%	42.86%	<b>44%</b>
Specific staff for the management of Social Networks	n.d.	n.d.	<b>36%</b>
Style and usage guide for Social Networks	n.d.	n.d.	<b>32%</b>

Table 9

As a novelty compared to previous editions, since all parliaments are convinced that the projection of their work on the social networks triggers great interest, this year's study asked assemblies to evaluate the impact and outreach of the institutional Social Networks, by scoring from 1 to 4 (1 being "very little", 2 "little", 3 "quite " and 4 "a lot").

Sixty-six percent of the assemblies declared that they used their Facebook account a lot or quite a lot, whilst 64 percent say the same of their Twitter account.

The appraisal of each parliament as regards the effects of the Social Networks among the citizens is significant.

**Twenty-seven percent consider that SN favours knowledge about parliamentary activity “a lot”, while 47 percent believe that they favour it “quite a lot”. However, half of the parliaments (49 percent) believe that Social Networks favour public participation in the parliamentary institution “a little” or “very little”, while 61 percent believe that they help “little” or “very little” to regain trust in the institutions.**

<b>Appraisal of the use and effectiveness of Social networks</b> (4: a lot. 3: quite. 2: little. 1: very little)				
	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Use of the institutional Facebook account?	46%	20%	20%	14%
Use of the institutional Twitter account?	57%	7%	22%	14%
Social Networks improve knowledge of the institution	33%	45%	11%	11%
Social Networks improve knowledge of parliamentary activity	27%	47%	21%	5%
Social Networks encourage citizen participation in the parliamentary institution	11%	40%	27%	22%
Social Networks help to regain trust in institutions	11%	28%	56%	5%

Table 10

## e-Voting

The development of mechanisms to facilitate online voting at the regional elections still is a pending matter for the parliaments surveyed. Only one out of 25 participants provides that option although it has not been applied yet.

Some country legislations forbid such possibility at state level, whilst in other cases its implementation depends on the initiative of the regional parliament.

Electronic voting			
	2013	2014	2015
Online voting at regional elections	0%	0%	4%
Telematic voting for assembly members at Plenary sessions	n.d.	n.d.	16%

Table 11

In this section, the members or the Parliaments were asked for the first time about the option of electronic voting in plenary sessions. Only 16 percent of the assemblies envisage such an option.

## How to attract young people to politics

The last paragraph in this block of indicators evaluates the measures taken by the assemblies to improve knowledge of parliamentary activity and attract young people to politics, as this is the sector of the population that shows most alienation and indifference towards the institutions according to the socio-statistical analysis.

It is worth pointing out that **nine out of ten parliaments run activities intended for young people**, two points more than in 2014. For the rest of the items analysed, a decline can be observed compared to the last edition of the study.

<b>Measures to attract young people to politics</b>			
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Conferences for young people	77.27%	85.71%	<b>88%</b>
Collaboration with universities	72.73%	80.95%	<b>72%</b>
Specific space on the institutional website for young people	45.45%	66.67%	<b>52%</b>
Lectures at universities by assembly members	31.82%	47.62%	<b>28%</b>
Videoconference lectures by assembly members	13.64%	9.52%	<b>12%</b>
Dissemination of the activities intended for young people on the website of the Parliament, Social Networks, etc.	27.27%	61.90%	<b>50%</b>

**Tabla 12**

The most widespread activities intended for young people are of an academic and informative nature, such as juvenile plenary sessions, university debates, speeches, courses and seminars, agreements for collaboration with the universities as well as research and work practice.

## PART II. Evaluation of good Practice in e-Democracy

In this section, the parliaments evaluate the initiatives and classify the initiatives and good practices for the development and promotion of e-Democracy using the indicators analysed in the first section.

In each section, a score of 1 to 4 (1 being “very little”, 2 “little”, 3 “quite” and 4 “a lot”) is given to the 30 main indicators in the first section on the basis of their Viability, Cost, Opportuneness, Efficacy, Innovation, Effect in generating proximity with citizens and Regaining citizens’ trust.

The final evaluation of the initiatives was calculated as follows:

*Final classification: Scores for Viability + Opportuneness + Efficacy + Innovation + Effect in generating proximity with citizens + Regaining citizens’ trust – Cost.*

Out of the 25 assemblies surveyed, 11 completed this part of the questionnaire, 9 completed it partially and 5 left it blank.

With a maximum value of 480 points, the assemblies afforded **the highest score (306 points) to online broadcasting of plenary sessions on the parliament’s website**; whilst the least highly valued initiative was electronic voting in regional elections (128 points).

The results of the evaluation of good practice throughout the different phases of e-Democracy are detailed in the tables below:

<b>e-Information phase</b>	
	Score
FAQ section	<b>209</b>
Statistics on the number of visits to the website	<b>237</b>
Online plenary sessions	<b>306</b>
Statistics on the number of people following plenary sessions	<b>283</b>
List of regulations currently being processed on the website	<b>255</b>
Video link to the commissions	<b>195</b>
Online broadcasting of events	<b>277</b>

Table 13

<b>e-Consultation phase</b>	
	Score
RSS Subscription to the parliamentary bulletin	<b>199</b>
RSS Subscription to the schedule of plenary meetings	<b>220</b>
RSS Subscription to the schedule of commissions and/or working groups	<b>206</b>
Subscription to records of plenary meetings	<b>234</b>
Subscription to records of commission meetings and/or working groups	<b>230</b>
Contact by e-mail	<b>277</b>

Table 14

<b>e-Participation phase</b>	
	Score
Web space for citizen's questions	<b>213</b>
Questions from citizens to the assembly members at plenary meetings	<b>137</b>
Web space for Popular Legislative Initiative	<b>219</b>
On-line collection of signatures for PLI	<b>175</b>
Online opinion surveys	<b>178</b>
Online Forums for citizen participation	<b>194</b>

Institutional Facebook account	<b>225</b>
Institutional Twitter account	<b>254</b>
Institutional YouTube account	<b>208</b>
Citizen hearings at commissions	<b>243</b>
Videoconferences of assembly members with citizens	<b>179</b>
Online citizen contributions to legislation currently being processed	<b>198</b>

Table 15

<b>e-Voting phase</b>	
	Score
Electronic voting at regional elections	<b>128</b>
System of electronic voting for MPs	<b>156</b>

Table 16

<b>Measures to attract young people to politics</b>	
	Score
Conferences and debates	<b>292</b>
Space for young people on the Parliament's website	<b>260</b>
Lectures by MPs at universities	<b>175</b>

Table 17

According to the scores given, **the most highly-valued e-Democracy initiatives**, in descending order, are:

1. Online broadcasting of Plenary meetings
2. Conferences, debates and activities intended for young people
3. Statistics on the number of persons following Plenary meetings
4. Online broadcasting of other events
5. Contact with the Parliament by e-mail
6. Specific space for young people on the Parliament's website
7. List of regulations currently being processed
8. Parliament Twitter account
9. Citizens' hearings at parliamentary commissions
10. Statistics on visits to the website

The **least highly-valued initiatives**, on the other hand, are:

26. Online collection of signatures for Popular Legislative Initiatives
27. Lectures by MPs at universities
28. System of electronic voting for MPs
29. Questions from citizens at plenary meetings
30. Electronic voting at the regional elections

According to the statistical results of the indicators on e-Democracy, a correlation can be observed between the practices valued less highly by the assemblies and the less widespread, as is the case of electronic voting (both at elections and at Plenary meetings) or the online collection of signatures for PLIs.

## **PART III. INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIVE PROJECTS IN e-DEMOCRACY**

Innovative projects and initiatives in e-Democracy of the parliaments and assemblies that have taken actions in this respect are presented below.

### **Andalusian Parliament (Spain)**

The Andalusian Parliament has launched several initiatives during the ninth Legislature (which remain valid during the tenth Legislature) to implement and develop e-Democracy in the regional Chamber.

Apart from the so-called “Open Parliament” project, which aims to create a more open institution through the holding of conferences, seminars, exhibitions and other types of activities, we should mention the visits to the regional parliament by students and citizens at large, which play an essential role in raising awareness of the functions and activities of the Andalusian Parliament.

Likewise, the Andalusian Parliament has made a commitment to communication with the citizens through the Social Networks (with institutional accounts on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) and the Open Parliament Letter Box (*e-Consultation*), to which the citizens can directly send their queries, suggestions or any other question of any type to the parliament itself, from which they will receive an answer as soon as possible.

### **Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Region of the Azores (Portugal)**

In the *e-Information* phase, under the “Googlear Project”, a Google device is being implemented on the entire legislative database, with access to the

entire process of any legislative initiative.

In addition, in the *e-Participation* phase, provision has been made for online requests for information and the monitoring of requests and public legislation initiatives.

### **Parliament of Cantabria (Spain)**

In the *e-Information* phase, we should highlight the online broadcast of plenary meetings, via streaming, the online video library and access to all regional regulations.

In *e-Consultation*, there is RSS subscription and online and e-mail services.

In *e-Participation*, the Parliament of Cantabria is an 'Open Parliament', with a website for debates and proposals by the citizens for each new bill. It also offers live online broadcasts of events held at the regional parliament and has its own video library (not on YouTube), and it is present on the main Social Networks.

### **Assembly of Extremadura (Spain)**

In the *e-Information* phase, the Assembly of Extremadura publishes on its website all the documentation relating to bills, legislative proposals and draft decree-laws.

In the *e-Consultation* section, a platform has been designed on the website so as to facilitate public access to the Committee on Petitions.

In *e-Participation*, plenary meetings are broadcast online with sign language and subtitles, and a window is available for the citizens to make their comments in real time by using Twitter. Immediately after the end of the commission, plenary meetings and press conferences, the video is

published on the YouTube channel of the Parliament and disseminated through the Social Networks.

## **Regional Council of Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy)**

The web page of the institution is being continuously reviewed and some contents (such as the institutional role of the *Consiglio*) are available in English and in the languages of the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The hearings of the interested parties and/or the activity of the commissions or working groups are broadcast online, through appropriate technological applications, and in compliance with internal regulations.

In addition, the video library of plenary meetings is available and it is intended to adopt mechanisms to collect statistics in real time during the plenary sessions.

### *e-Consultation*

It is planned for RSS subscription to be put in place on the website (for example, for the online press agency).

### *e-Participation*

Activity has increased on Facebook and Twitter and accounts have been activated on LinkedIn and Google+, in addition to the improvement of the website.

### *e-Voting*

In 2007, a preliminary study was carried out on electronic voting but, since then, no progress has been made in this respect. Even so, the members of the Regional Council have been able to vote electronically during plenary sessions since 2002.

## **Regional Council of Molise (Italy)**

Among the initiatives of the Regional Council of Molise, the project for the development of an application for mobile devices (iOS and Android) is worth mentioning. The data platform, in a first stage, includes the following sections:

- > Organisation;
- > News;
- > The minutes of the reports of the individual council meetings;
- > Interventions, agenda and Members of the Council;
- > Notifications to allow immediate updates.

The platform will be structured along the following lines:

- > Acquisition of data on the website of the Regional Council
- > Acquisition of data related to events held at the Regional Council
- > Acquisition of data about laws

## **Parliament of the Basque Country (Spain)**

Since the launch of its website, the Basque Parliament has applied a strategy which has led to the creation of an integrated system of transparency linked to Parliamentary files (the “Glass Cube” Theory).

The systems that have been put in place allow both the personnel of the institution and the parliamentarians to help citizens to access all of the original documents, the entire process and all of the steps during processing. This way of working has made the processing of all case files completely transparent. Furthermore, proprietary tools for the segmentation of information and subscription to issues and initiatives (Zabalik) and participation tools (Parte Hartu, ADI!, ADI!Bakea), ensure

that the citizens are not simply informed, but that they can interact with the Basque Parliament.

The Zabalik platform has become an efficient information channel segmented by themes and initiatives. This channel enables citizens to make specific subscriptions according to their own interests in parliamentary activity. Parliament then notifies them on the state of the issues of concern.

Well-informed citizens open up channels of participation; in this respect, the Basque Country has implemented several tools of its own: Parte Hartu (Questions to the parliamentary groups); ADI! (Spanish Acronym for Contributes, Debates, Influences. This tool ensures access to projects and bills) and ADI!Bakea (specifically linked to the parliamentary agreement on peace and coexistence) (e-Participation).

The rest of the issues that could be developed in connection with consultation and voting are not, for the time being, included in the rules of the assembly, meaning that they are not yet regulated. The modification of the parliamentary regulations will allow actions in this respect.

### **Regional Council of Piedmont (Italy)**

The Regional Council of Piedmont has established CRPNet, a section dedicated to citizen participation on its official website. This section enables the citizens, experts in this field, and local APs to undertake their activities and participate through their comments and suggestions. These services are one of the measures adopted by the Regional Council to involve the citizens.

## *Information*

### *Council Documents Procedure*

The Council Documents Procedure service allows registered users to select from an *ad hoc* list the documents (invoices and laws, draft resolutions, agendas, movements, regulations) and/or fields of interest (including agriculture, health, education, etc) and follow their progress in the Council by means of automatic e-mail notifications.

The users can consult the text attached to the selected documents by clicking on the e-mail link and so accessing the “Arianna” database and Council Minutes. Thus, the citizens are able to read any draft legislation and follow the whole process step-by-step as it transforms the proposal into a regional law.

### *e-Consultation*

#### *Institutional Consultations*

This service manages institutional consultations made by the Committees of the Regional Council. Every time an act is entrusted to a Committee, the Committee consults experts in the matter or interested professionals from the different sectors concerned (i.e. the institutions, the self-employed, associations, etc) to gather suggestions and opinions which will prove useful in the preparation of the text discussed in the Council.

This service aims to simplify the procedure by helping both the Committees when preparing the call for proposals and the collection of material prepared by the experts consulted, and the experts when submitting the documentation (reports). Through CRPnet, the Committees can automatically upload the material to a special restricted area for examination and generate an automatic e-mail to invite the experts to examine it.

The experts, through the CPRnet access, can access a list of all the documents presented in the past. Once the documents are uploaded, an e-mail is automatically sent to the Commission responsible for the

consultation which is then able to search for and download the material received.

As explained above, CPRnet is only one of the measures adopted by the Regional Council to implement e-Democracy and promote the involvement of the citizens. The Regional Council of Piedmont has a social television called [www.cрпиемonte.tv](http://www.cрпиемonte.tv) and its main website [www.cr.piemonte.it](http://www.cr.piemonte.it) offers, among other things, important information and the participation of important services related to e-Democracy:

- Access through the website to complete information on laws, law processes and draft laws
- Access through the website to information about the actions of the administration
- Live broadcast, multimedia documents and complete summarised archives of plenary sessions
- Multimedia downloads of the interventions of each assembly member in plenary sessions
- Subscription to the newsletter
- Live Twitter feed during the plenary sessions
- Links to social networks and accounts managed by the Regional Council: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Pinterest and Instagram.

In 2013, the Regional Council of Piedmont undertook to conduct important research into “Regional Civic Resources”, aimed at exploring new forms of e-Democracy services. The Regional Council is now planning the work in the next phase and its investment in “Regional Civic Resources”, based on this research and the latest international trends.

### **Legislative Assembly of Emilia Romagna (Italy)**

In recent years, the Assembly has focused on improving the information system through:

- > Reorganisation of the graphics of the website;

- > Reformulation of all the contents, making clear to the citizens who is who and who is responsible for the administrative procedures;
- > Reorganisation of all the personnel and material resources so that the interaction between them can bring about the best possible communication with the citizens.
- > Diversification of the ways of promoting the informative contents through the creation and management of accounts on social networks.

This last point has links to e-Participation since the “followers” or “friends” can make comments on the messages.

The objectives of the Internet strategy are e-Consultation, e-Participation and e-Voting.

### **Parliament of La Rioja (Spain)**

The most innovative element in this field has been the implementation of the electronic voting for assembly members.

### **Saxon State Parliament (Germany)**

The parliament is currently redesigning its website.

In the future, more information on plenary meetings will be provided, with comments and debates on the most relevant decisions, more thematic information, as well as the possibility of subscription by e-mail. Moreover, there are plans to share news on the Social Networks and create a Twitter account to share news headlines automatically.

Furthermore, it has been proposed to provide information in simpler,

more audiovisual language, with new specific web pages for young people and students.

This new website should be available in August 2015.

## **Parliament of Salzburg (Austria)**

### *e-Information*

#### *Social Media and Webcast Initiative:*

Webcasts of plenary sessions and committee meetings of the Landtag started with a small personal initiative by the deputy president of the Chamber, Wolfgang Saliger, in September 2008, who introduced “low-tech devices” and free channels. Today, the Webcast of the Salzburg Landtag has matured. The updating of the hardware is almost complete, mobile devices are serviced under the HTML5 standard, and since last year the FTP archive has been replaced by an easy-to-access video archive.

Initially, the social media platforms on Twitter and Facebook served as a means to promote the online webcast but over time they have become news channels in their own right. The next development will be the integration of the social media platforms into the web platforms of the regional parliament, achieving greater interaction between the political groups, assembly members, media and society, as well as greater accountability and participation.

Ref.:

<http://www.salzburg.gv.at/landtaglive>

[http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/video-archiv\\_plenum\\_.htm](http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/video-archiv_plenum_.htm)

[http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/video-archiv\\_ausschuss.htm](http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/video-archiv_ausschuss.htm)

<https://twitter.com/landtaglive>

<http://www.facebook.com/salzbuergerlandtaglive>

### *The Parliamentary Information System (LPI):*

All the documents which are part of the stenographic protocol and official records of the plenary sessions and committee meetings are available for reading and downloading on the website of the regional parliament.

They can be accessed on the database using different semantic, procedural and time criteria. When this system was implemented in 1994, the HTML text was chosen to be used on the database to achieve maximum accessibility through search engines. Therefore, today, it is much easier to present our documents on machines in readable formats under the OGD initiatives free from the “PDF barrier” which is an obstacle to so many public bodies.

The documents issued between 1945 and 1994 are published on a specific website co-sponsored in collaboration with the National Library of Austria. Historical documents between 1861 and 1934 are also available there.

Ref.:

[http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/parlamentarische\\_materialien.htm](http://www.salzburg.gv.at/pol/landtag/parlamentarische_materialien.htm)

### *Open Government Data Initiative:*

One year ago the Government of the State of Salzburg launched an initiative called Open Government Data aimed at gathering all public data not subject to the provisions on data protection and privacy, and making it available through an online portal, machine-readable and with anonymous access.

The Parliament of Salzburg considers itself to be part of this initiative and intends to use its impulse to improve its own online image. We are looking for implementation solutions like the German "OffenesParlament.de", projects of the Sunlight Foundation or poplus.org. We are currently working on an XML-based solution to provide machine-readability and

standardisation.

Ref.:

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2012/09/14/declaration-on-parliamentary-openness/>

<http://offenesparlament.de/>

<http://www.salzburg.gv.at/buerger-service/ogd.htm>

### *Jularockt.at –The Landtag youth website*

Jularockt.at is a youth website in every sense of the word. It was designed by young people for young people. It first started as a school project and was transmitted from school to school in Salzburg for improvement according to what young people consider to be useful to them.

Ref.:

<http://www.jularockt.at/>

### *e-Consultation*

#### *Citizen consultation on current projects*

The proposed legislation of the State Government is available online to be reviewed and discussed. This procedure however lacks formal or legal regulation and public commitment is low.

Ref.:

[http://service.salzburg.gv.at/publix/Index?prodextern=true&gruppeldap=gesetz\\_entw&sortierung=datum%20desc](http://service.salzburg.gv.at/publix/Index?prodextern=true&gruppeldap=gesetz_entw&sortierung=datum%20desc)

### *e-Participation*

#### *Study Group on the reform of Democracy*

In September 2013, the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional and Administrative Affairs decided to set up a Study Group on the reform of

Democracy. To facilitate the participation of the citizens and media in the debate, Parliament launched a blog to complement the procedures under way.

The blog introduces the assembly members who describe their work and the views within the Study Group, and provides a window to enable the citizens to discuss the issues. Moreover, the citizens can subscribe to a newsletter, download videos of the meetings, documents and background information and they can make suggestions.

The blog is completed with a Twitter panel using the hashtag #demokratie-sbg.

RSS subscription is available on blog articles and comments.

Ref.:

<http://demokratie.salzburg.at/>

### **Parliament of Styria (Austria)**

The website is available in English.

Among the innovative projects worthy of note is the Evo Cube (QR - Reader; with information on the Regional Parliament of Styria); the Pallast 2.0 project (the project has been run without the use of paper since 2005, meaning that all official affairs are paperless) and the launching of an app for smart phones (it will soon have its own application).

### **Regional Council of Tuscany (Italy)**

This parliament has approved a Law to promote the participation of a public committee called "Autorità Partecipazione" to finance public projects that the citizens or other social groups present to the authorities for validation. Further information is available on [www.opentoscana.it](http://www.opentoscana.it). The projects financed are run within the territory in the name of the *Comuni* (municipality) and not within the regional parliament.

### **Walloon Parliament (Belgium)**

Currently, the parliament is carrying out the following initiatives:

- Live broadcasting of questions on current events on local television channels.
- Possibility for the citizens to express their opinions on proposals and draft decrees online.
- Possibility for the citizens to register their requests online.
- Online issue of educational and informative material for visits (in particular for young people).

### **Parliament of Wallonia-Brussels (Belgium)**

The working schedule includes:

Mid-January 2015: development of Social Networks with the launch of Instagram and Twitter accounts.

February to March 2015: organization of an Instagram competition aimed at the general public, with the theme "French words taken from foreign languages".

End of April 2015: new edition of the film on the parliamentary institution.

April to September 2015: roadmap for the visits to the Parliament, aimed at attracting more visitors.

April to September 2015: organisation of “The Children’s Parliament”.

September 2015: publication of the Annual Report of the Parliament.

2014 - 2015: progressive development of conferences accessible via web-TV streaming.

## CONCLUSIONS

The report on Good Practice and Innovative Projects in e-Democracy maintains, in its 2015 edition, the same premises as in the 2013 and 2014 documents to make it possible to analyse the evolution of the implementation and functioning of the e-Democracy indicators and their development over these three years.

As pointed out above, when analysing the statistics we should take into account that parliaments and assemblies that did not collaborate in previous editions of the study have answered the 2015 questionnaire, whereas others that took part in the 2013 and 2014 editions are missing from the 2015 report. However important this circumstance may be and having to consider it, it should not affect, in principle, the object of the analysis, although it can explain the decline of some indicators compared to previous years. Be that as it may, in all events, the results of this data collection, as for previous years, offer an accurate reflection of the average reality of the work the CALRE parliaments and assemblies are achieving in this field.

It should also be remembered that some indicators included in the 2013 and 2014 studies, such as those on information about assembly members, have been removed from this report and included in the *Analysis of the implementation of the principles of Public Transparency in the European Regional Legislative Assemblies*, also prepared by this Working Group.

From the answers sent by 25 European Regional Legislative Assemblies and Parliaments, we can see that the CALRE Assemblies maintain their commitment to and positive progress towards the implementation and development of good practices throughout the different phases of e-Democracy (*e-Information, e-Consultation, e-Participation and e-Voting*).

In the *e-Information* phase, the parliaments are making progress on the informative content available to citizens on their websites, where parliamentary debates have special prominence, as well as the so-called

“Open Parliament Initiative” where the assemblies organise activities beyond their legislative functions in order to open the institution to society and make their daily work more familiar to the citizens.

For *e-Consultation*, quite significant progress has been made (40 points) as regards contact with parliaments by e-mail, while the syndication of content maintains its trend. Furthermore, as a novelty this year, according to the data, 60 percent of the parliaments have specific staff to address citizen’s consultations. This development shows how interested parliaments are in satisfying the demands of the citizens.

The *e-Participation* phase still has indicators with room for improvement. While 80 percent of the assemblies support the concept of Popular Legislative Initiative, only 16 percent take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICTs to foster this process. The same goes for the issue of questions posed by citizens at plenary meetings, only 20 percent.

Nor can progress be observed in other mechanisms for citizen participation, such as online opinion surveys or opinion forums. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that the assemblies that use these means of interaction with the citizens indicate that their impact on the citizens and the degree of participation and/or acceptance are minimal.

As for the Social Networks, the indicators are similar to those of 2014, showing a slight increase in the use of Twitter and YouTube, compared with the number of institutional accounts on Facebook.

On the other hand, assembly members value Social Networks quite differently depending on each particular case, since half of them believe that they do not favour public participation in the parliamentary institution and 61 percent consider that they help “little” or “very little” to regain the trust of the citizens in the institutions. Nonetheless, they regard the Social Networks as a good tool to publicise the work of the institution.

Finally, the *e-voting* phase continues to be a pending matter for the assemblies.

Besides the indicators in e-Democracy, the report this year again deals

with the measures and initiatives to attract young people to politics.

Nine out of ten parliaments organise specific activities for young people and, although some indicators show a decline, the assemblies maintain the progress observed in previous editions.

As for good practice for implementing e-Democracy, the most highly-valued initiatives, in descending order, are as follows:

1. Online broadcasting of Plenary meetings
2. Conferences, debates and activities intended for young people
3. Statistics on persons following Plenary meetings
4. Live broadcasting of other events
5. Contact with the Parliament by e-mail
6. Specific space for young people on the Parliament's website
7. List of regulations currently being processed
8. Parliament's Twitter account
9. Citizen's hearings at parliamentary commissions
10. Statistics on website visits

On the contrary, the least highly-valued initiatives are:

26. Online collection of signatures for Popular Legislative Initiatives
27. Lectures by MPs at universities
28. System of electronic voting for MPs
29. Question time for citizens at plenary meetings
30. Electronic voting at the regional elections

It does not seem strange that the most highly-valued practices are the most widespread, whilst those where the parliaments need to improve are the valued less highly.

Finally, the third block of the study on the innovative projects in the field of e-Democracy evidences the strong commitment of the parliaments to generate the means and develop projects to promote open, receptive and participatory institutions.

In this respect, the projects included in the study stand not only as an example of the work being carried out, but also as a guide or an inspiration for other assemblies when it comes to developing the different phases of e-Democracy.

**The Presidency of the Andalusian Parliament,  
as coordinator of the CALRE working group on e-Democracy,  
wishes to thank the assemblies and parliaments that  
have collaborated in the elaboration of this study**

Regional Council of Abruzzo  
Andalusian Parliament  
Regional Parliament of the Principality of Asturias  
Regional Assembly of the Azores  
Regional Council of Calabria  
Parliament of the Canary Islands  
Parliament of Cantabria  
Assembly of Extremadura  
Regional Council of Friuli Venezia Giulia  
Regional Council of Lombardy  
Regional Council of Molise  
Regional Parliament of Upper Austria  
Parliament of the Basque Country  
Parliament of German Speaking Community  
Regional Council of Piedmont  
Legislative Assembly of Emilia Romagna  
Parliament of La Rioja  
Regional Parliament of Saxony  
Parliament of Salzburg  
Schleswig Holstein  
Parliament of Styria  
Regional Council of Tuscany  
Parliament of Voralberg  
Walloon Parliament  
Parliament of Wallonia-Brussels

The Presidency of the Andalusian Parliament extends its gratitude  
to the Presidency of CALRE and the eighteen participating parliaments  
of the 2015 Working Group on e-Democracy