



**Working group of CALRE
on interactive democracy**



Dear CALRE members,

At the end of 2016, I had the honour of being reappointed for a year as coordinator of the Working Group on Interactive Democracy.

This subject is particularly close to my heart because I am convinced of the importance of maintaining contact with citizens throughout a legislative session and also of the need to reconcile young people with democracy.

After hearing from experts in the academic world in 2016, the 2017 meeting put more emphasis on exchanges of good practices and the presentation of concrete experiences to bring citizens closer to elected officials.

Below you will find the minutes of the meeting of the working group held on 30 June 2017, where three experts took the floor, namely:

- Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit of the «Europe for Citizens» programme of the European Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), outlined the existing tools for citizen participation in the European decision-making process and the «Europe for Citizens» programme;
- Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of eGovlab, the Swedish Centre for Excellence in e-Governance, who presented the methods proposed by eGovlab to allow innovation through collaboration between different players (utilities, companies, universities and citizens) based on societal challenges identified by citizens.
- Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parliament & Citizens, who detailed the functioning of the Parliament and Citizens platform which allows French MPs to interact with their citizens in the framework of making new laws. In particular, she presented the new «Let's Make the Laws» initiative.

Mr Stéphane Quain also shared his experience as a member of the citizen panel on the issues of ageing, recently held in the Parliament of Wallonia.

These presentations were followed by an exchange of views and good practices within the CALRE member assemblies.

I will present the main conclusions of this meeting on the occasion of the Plenary Assembly of CALRE on 9 and 10 November 2017 and I encourage it to continue this reflection which is essential for the future of our democracies and the European project.

André ANTOINE
President of the Parliament of Wallonia
Coordinator of the Working Group of the
CALRE on interactive democracy

MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE CALRE ON INTERACTIVE DEMOCRACY

Coordinator: Mr André Antoine
President of the Parliament of Wallonia

Parliament of Wallonia, Namur
30 June 2017

Contents

Opening of the session	6
Presentation by Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA)	8
Presentation by Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of the eGovlab, Centre of Excellence for e-Governance (Sweden)	12
Presentation by Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens (France)	16
Testimony of Mr Stéphane Quain, member of the Citizen Panel on the challenges of ageing (Belgium / Wallonia)	22
Exchanges of views and best practices on interactive democracy in the CALRE member assemblies	28
Speech by Mr André Antoine on the occasion of the Plenary Assembly of CALRE 9 and 10 November 2017	37



IN ATTENDANCE

Parliament of Wallonia

Mr André Antoine, President
Mr Frédéric Janssens, Secretary General
Mr Olivier De Decker, Head of the International Relations Directorate
Mr Pierre-André Rixhon, Attaché at the Department of International Relations

Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

Mr Philippe Courard, President
Ms Sandra Toussaint, General Counsel

Parliament of the German-speaking Community

Mr Alexander Miesen, President
Ms Nadia Reuter, Legal Expert

Flemish Parliament

Ms Julie Clément, Director

Parliament of Andalusia

Mr Juan Pablo Durán Sánchez, President
Ms Sol Calzado García, Chief of Cabinet of the Presidency
Mr Javier Pardo Falcón, Secretary General
Ms Mercedes Pastor Garcia, Press Director of the Cabinet of the Presidency
Ms Maria Roso Garcia, Institutional Relations
Mr Rosario León Román, Chief of Protocol

Assembly of Extremadura

Ms Blanca Martin Delgado, President of the Assembly
Ms Maria Eugenia Romero Vasquianez, Legal Counsel

Regional Council of Lombardy

Mr Fabrizio Cecchetti, Vice-President of the Regional Council
Mr Alessandro Corbetta, Assistant

Parliament of the Azores

Ms Sandra Costa, Secretary General

Region of Bavaria

Ms Christine Claaszen, Representative of the Parliament of Bavaria to the European Union

Speakers

Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit «Europe for Citizens» programme of the European Executive Agency “Education, Audiovisual and Culture” (EACEA)
Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of the eGovlab, Centre of Excellence in e-governance (Sweden)
Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens (France)
Mr Stéphane Quain, member of the Citizen panel on the challenges of ageing (Belgium/Wallonia)

OPENING OF THE SESSION

- *The session opened at 10 hours 1 minute.*

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia - President of the CALRE, Mr Pablo Duran Sanchez, Assembly Presidents, Secretaries General, Speakers, Experts, dear guests, may I extend a warm welcome to you all to the Parliament of Wallonia for this meeting of the Working Group on Interactive Democracy, which I look forward to chairing for the second year in a row.

To give you the best possible welcome and to highlight the important role of a legislative assembly, and particularly that of our Parliament of Wallonia - as I reminded the president of the CALRE - we have even organised for you a government crisis since, as I speak to you today, I no longer know who is in the majority and who in the opposition.

However, along with my colleague Philippe Courard, I am sure of one thing, that today the power lies with the Parliament.

Again this week, this Wednesday, we had a number of projects and proposals submitted to our assembly. As President, I was unable to announce the verdict before. It was according to the sensitivities of each.

It is therefore an original, singular parliament that you have before you, a parliament proud of its prerogatives. That being said, I hope that this government crisis will not go on for too long. In the current economic and social climate, in the context of European construction and reconstruction, we need to have a government that is up and running for our citizens as quickly as possible.

I would like to begin by highlighting the excellent work done under the leadership of my predecessor, President Juan Pablo Duran Sanchez. The results and recommendations of the e-democracy working group that he headed for many months have been invaluable to us as we continue our work.

During the previous session, we welcomed three high-quality speakers from the academic world, invited to speak on the concept of interactive democracy. In their respective speeches, Mr Blondiaux and Professor Louvin, along with Ms Schnapper, all touched on the glaring crisis facing Western democracy, linked both to our methods of functioning and to the necessary capacity to find

concrete solutions in response to the aspiration of our fellow citizens.

The reactions to this crisis differ significantly. While some people are simply turning away from so-called public affairs, the management of society, others, on the contrary, are striving for a renewed democracy, notably through increased participation, if not even, to cite Professor Blondiaux, "a continuous democracy". This is what we have embraced within our Parliament, where we have clearly stated that the voices of our fellow citizens could not be heard only once every five years.

In the past, citizens would give us their voice. Today, at the very most, they lend it to us, but have every intention of taking it back to make it heard themselves on certain issues that concern them on a daily basis.

Based on these observations, we have chosen to invite speakers with somewhat different profiles, this time with a greater foothold in the field and in concrete projects. The aim of this morning's working session will therefore be, above all, to share and disseminate best practices in order to reproduce and adapt them to the realities of our respective parliaments.

For example, Mr Gilles Pelayo, from the European Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture, will talk to us about his «Europe for Citizens» programme as well as various projects supported by this agency - at a time when, and this is my own impression, but one I firmly believe in, Europe is once again gaining momentum I hope that, at the end of his speech, we will be able to say: «It's not just a question of Europe for citizens, but also of Citizens for Europe».

Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of eGovlab in Sweden, will outline the many activities of his Centre of Excellence in the field of e-governance. I know he has become a bit of a star across the Atlantic, so much so that our Secretary-General - and I want to thank him - Mr Janssens, brought him back from the United States so that we could hear him. We've gone to great lengths to get him here, you could say, but today he is here with us and I am in no doubt that we will have a high-quality dialogue with this renowned expert.

We will then hear from Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of the Parlement & Citoyens platform. Her organisation, which we had the privilege of visiting in Paris, is notably at the origin of the campaign «Faisons la loi/Let's make our own law», aiming at promoting the co-construction of

public policies, decrees and laws, by taking up a concern of citizens and relaying it via members of Parliament. The aim is not to have the elected representatives on one side and the citizens on the other but to speak with one voice to make laws together. You will see that this is a very remarkable platform that has already proved its worth, since about thirty opposition and majority MPs from the former French legislature have been involved in the subject.

In addition, this model is being taken up today by other organisations. For example, a trade union has decided to completely overhaul its programme thanks to the input from its members, through this platform. You will see that we as politicians have a lot to learn.

Finally, we will be hearing from a person who is no stranger to this Parliament, but who is not an expert. Although he is quickly becoming one. He is a citizen. Mr Stéphane Quain, who is an ordinary citizen of Wallonia. Well not quite as ordinary as that, given that, when he was approached by a polling institute trying to bring together the 1100 Walloons likely to represent the 3.8 million Walloons, he was the one selected. The question was very simple: are you interested in political life, are you interested in the challenges of ageing - which was the theme we wanted to work on, here in Wallonia - and are you ready to replace Wallonia's elected representatives for a few weeks? Mr Quain was thus proclaimed a Member of Parliament for a month.

You will see, his experience is particularly striking. Some, in the Walloon media, had a little sneer at their expense, considering that trusting citizens was a bit of a joke, that it was serious business, best left to the political class. Let's not forget that we all started off as citizens and that we will all return to that state one day. We will therefore hear his account of this historic first within our assemblies, his account of the Citizen Panel.

Moreover, the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, with Mr Courard, also relayed this experience, in a different way, focusing particularly on European construction. It is true that, for the first time, at the level of our Parliament of Wallonia, 30 citizens, representing all age groups, from all regions of Wallonia, with a different socio-economic profile, educated to different levels, came together in this very place, in this room, to work, to study, to dialogue, to consult each other and finally to try to find a consensus, without any political training. You will see the result, but I will leave it to him to describe both the positive elements and any criticisms that

could also be voiced. We are also here, of course, to take them on board.

This takes me to the point I would like to make as, dear colleagues, since the beginning of this legislative term, back from a 10-year stint in the Government, I was very eager - and I want to express my gratitude to the members of the Bureau of this assembly and especially to our administration and our clerk, the secretary general - to breathe new life into the assembly, as with the project of the house of the citizens. Any expenditure invested in a Parliament can only be justified if the citizen has his rightful place in this assembly.

We have rolled out a host of initiatives to ensure that this is the case. For example, any Walloon citizen can today submit a petition electronically. As long as it falls within the purview of our Parliament, this petition, however strange, is sent to the commission. When we have proposals or draft decrees, proposals for the members of Parliament, projects for the Government, any citizen or association of citizens or federation, or pressure group, can, for 10 days, submit any element, either to say that this text is very good or to say that it is very bad or, on the contrary, to suggest deleting a particular chapter or including such or such an amendment. This is very much a form of interactive democracy and here we are back to the theme of this day where we are trying to share the prerogative of adopting texts, sharing it with the elected officials.

I know that we are only at the beginning, I know that there is still a lot of work to be done, that there is also scepticism among some citizens who think «what's the point?» or even among the elected representative «why should we? ». These are the two pitfalls that we will have to overcome in the coming months.

We hope that our Parliament, and I have seen this in a large number of assemblies in Europe and North America, will become a school of citizenship. We cannot leave that to other institutions or only leave it to other institutions. We must, from an early age, of course also for young people, adolescents, welcome all this young generation into our Parliament, to teach them once again about the importance of the democratic act, about the need for dialogue, discussion and debate, of obtaining a majority around a text. It is from an early age that we must interest young people in democracy and political life.

We have had the pleasure of welcoming, here in this Parliament, the 800 young councillors of the

various municipal town councils, to put it another way, of all our towns, to tell them that from the town to Parliament, the citizen, however young, also has a say in matters.

Dear colleagues, before giving the floor to our guests, I would like to share with you this sentence by the famous philosopher and writer, Jacques Derrida, who rightly wrote that «to be a democrat is to act by recognising that we never live in a society that is sufficiently democratic. Democracy needs to be built day after day». I therefore express the wish that today's work will be fruitful and that it will inspire each of us with the enthusiasm necessary to hatch innovative projects, the source of a more open democracy and more in line with the aspirations of our fellow citizens.

I would like you, when you go back to your assemblies, perhaps when boarding your plane, when getting into your train, to say to yourself, it was curiosity that mainly brought me to this morning's session in Wallonia, but what I found was both a co-motivation, the one I already had, but I could see that it was shared by colleagues from all over Europe, and maybe also some project that you will have the boldness, subject to a few tweaks of course, to roll out in your respective assemblies.

If we reach such a result, I think that the CALRE, Mr President, would be in synch with our democratic aspirations. Thank you.

Presentation by Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA)

Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA). - Mr President of the Parliament, Mr President of the CALRE, ladies and gentlemen, I am very grateful to the Parliament of Wallonia for the invitation to this seminar, to this debate on interactive democracy, as it is true that, when it comes to interactive democracy, the level of European governance is more often a defendant than a prosecutor. You have to start with that, I think, and say it bluntly. When you represent, as it is my role today, the level of European governance, it is with great humility that you have to come before representatives of the regional and local authorities, so great are the criticisms levelled at the European level when it comes to democratic legitimacy and representativeness. It is in this spirit that I address you today, combined with the joy that I always feel when I come to the beautiful city of Namur.

The observation - and I won't dwell on it for too long, given that President Antoine has already given his fine analysis - is that elections are not enough. I will simply point out that, as far as the European level is concerned, there is a kind of relative 'bad luck' in the timing, in the sense that it was precisely at the moment when, at European level, the competences of the the European Parliament were reinforced, at the moment when political parties started to be structured, at the moment when we put in place systems to strengthen the democratic legitimacy and representativeness of the European level, especially in the last European elections with the Spitzenkandidaten system when, finally, we had a President of the European Commission who was appointed, in accordance with the results of the European elections. It is therefore at this moment when the European representative bodies are becoming stronger, that, at the more general level, at the political level, in the perception of the citizens, traditional representative democracy has lost its value. There has been a scissors effect at European level, which is a very special challenge for the level of European governance that does not have the legitimacy of political, national or territorial authorities.

The European Union is of course aware of the problem, which is not that recent. It started to be felt more keenly at the turn of the century. It is therefore from the beginning of the 2000s

that the European Union began to tackle the problem head on and adopt a whole series of measures to reinforce the interactive dimension of democracy, including at the European level.

I will touch on a number of initiatives or measures that were taken at European level.

There is the so-called "Better Regulation" initiative that was launched back at the time of President Barroso, and which has been strengthened with the current President, Mr Juncker. It sets out to offer citizens maximum access, upstream of the European legislation, to legislative preparation, in particular at the level of the published impact analyses, to which the citizens or organised civil society at least, have access. You also have the system of public consultations, a system that has now become widespread at all levels of political governance, but which has been reinforced and re-refined at European level using electronic means. Public consultations have minimum durations. The system has thus become part and parcel of legislative preparation at European level and has become second nature.

The second element, which appeared with the Lisbon Treaty, is the much-talked-about European citizens' initiative, an opportunity for the citizen to ask the Commission to take initiatives in political or legislative matters. To so, it is «enough» to collect the signatures of 1 million citizens in seven Member States. The provisional evaluation of the initiative is, by the admission of the political level and the European Commission, rather mixed in the sense that, for the time being, it has not resulted in any legislative or political initiatives. That is why the Vice-President of the Commission, Mr Timmermans, undertook, some time ago, to review the scheme to make it more accessible to citizens, both from a technical point of view and from the point of view of data management or the admissibility and filter exercised by the European Commission.

A third point that I would stress in terms of direct democracy is the implementation of the law which is adopted at European Union level. Few know that, beyond the jurisdictional processes, European citizens have the ability to bring a complaint before the European Commission in the event of breaches of European Union law. It is a mechanism that lacks a formalised process.

There is a kind of electronic form on the portal of the European Commission and the European Union and any citizen can report to the European Commission what they consider to be an infringement of European Union law.

This is something that is relatively unfamiliar and is a very simple way for citizens to ensure that European laws, regulations and directives are actually implemented in matters that potentially affect all citizens. It is the case for environmental law, for example.

President Antoine brought up the issue of petitions. This system also exists at European level, the European Parliament has a Committee on Petitions. There is therefore a form of right of interpellation of the European administration by the citizens, through the parliamentary institution. Here again, at the European level, the parliamentary institution plays the role of representative of the citizens. We also have an ombudsman at European level - an ombudswoman in some way - Ms Emily O'Reilly, an Irish national, who also plays a very active role in overseeing the administration after referrals by citizens.

However, in both these cases, the petitions or ombudsman, we are more in the realm of remedies for the administrative pathology than in the field of political initiative. Nevertheless, it does facilitate the access of European citizens to the European administration.

The issue of transparency is another element. As is the case at all politico-administrative levels, the European level has had to significantly improve this dimension of transparency. It started with very liberal regulations on access to documents. The 2001 regulation on the access of citizens to administrative documents of the European Union is surely one of the most advanced - I do not know whether in the world - but certainly at European level. It is up to the administration to prove that a document cannot be accessible to European citizens. This is a serious constraint on the Community administrations, in that in some sectors requests for access to documents have spiralled.

Another aspect of this transparency that is now required by citizens is the question of access to open data. This is increasingly the rule at European level. I will mention the example of access to all European grants. There is a website called EU FTS, the financial transparency system of the European Union, which is very simple and easy to access, where any financial transfer from the EU budget, be it a local authority, an association or a supplier, is registered. There is an immediate traceability of any financial transfer from the European Union and the use made of the European budget which is granted by the budgetary authority to the Commission.

Transparency also concerns issues of ethics and integrity. Under the current Commission, at the initiative of Vice-President Timmermans, the Transparency Initiative was adopted, which increased the requirements in this area. This concerns for example the lobby register that the Commission has created and proposes to make inter-institutional, the publication of the diaries of the commissioners, the members of the cabinet of the commissioners, the directors general, i.e. the heads of the administrative services the European Commission, to ensure transparency in contacts with stakeholders. This also includes asset declarations by Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament.

All these elements of transparency to ensure that the citizen can play its role of controller. President Antoine quoted Jacques Derrida, I like to quote this function that the philosopher Émile Chartier, better known as Alain, attributes to the citizens: essentially a task of controller. Today, at European level, as at all politico-administrative levels, it is necessary to provide citizens with the means to exercise this task of control. The European level, like the national and territorial levels, is committed to doing so.

I will now turn my sights to the EU programmes that promote interactive democracy and participatory democracy, topics that are not quite the same but that overlap.

I head up a unit that runs a programme called «Europe for Citizens», which is not yet as well-known as other famous European Union programmes, such as «Erasmus Plus» which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year. This «Europe for Citizens» programme is only 10 years old, so it's still a bit young - for a good Bordeaux, say - but it's a very interesting programme that I wanted to present to you today within this working group.

It aims to support initiatives by civil society - therefore NGOs and organised civil society - or local and regional authorities in Europe. It does not set out to be an institutional information or communication programme on Europe, other structures take care of that aspect, but to support projects, either twinning of cities, or networks of cities, regions or local or regional authorities, which encourage the involvement of citizens in matters with relevance for Europe.

This programme has a relatively modest budget of € 26.5 million a year, covering all 28 EU Member States, of course, but also Western Balkan countries.

According to our estimates, it concerns around one million citizens every year.

During the last call for proposals, which took place this spring, we received 1,300 projects from all over Europe under this programme involving around 5,000 partners. It is a programme that is starting to come into its own. The beauty of it is that it allows citizens and local authorities to have their say at the European level, about European policies, the institutions of the European Union, the future of Europe, Euroscepticism, and to shape these policies themselves.

Your colleagues in the Brussels Parliament three weeks ago had invited another of the great thinkers on democracy of our age, Pierre Rosenthal. The big theory expounded by the latter is that we must add to classical representative democracy what he called «narrative democracy». I hope not to betray his thinking by saying that we must accompany representative democracy and endow citizens with the capacity to bring the problems experienced in society into the public space.

In a way, our «Europe for Citizens» programme shares this ambition of allowing organised civil society, local and regional authorities to formulate, analyse European policies and try to solve the problems that arise at the level of European governance.

Sometimes, we deal with very modest projects involving traditional, bilateral twinning, with a budget of 5,000 euros. This can be traditional Franco-German twinning projects that date back to the post-war period.

We also have much more complex projects with a budget of 150,000 euros which, over a period of one and a half or two years, allow a network of European capitals to reflect together, for example, on the question of migration. Currently, it is for example very interesting to compare the policies that are followed at territorial level on the subject of the hosting of refugees, in particular, between a Greek city or an Italian city which are countries directly confronted with the influx of asylum seekers or migrants, comparing points of view with cities and countries of transit such as Austria or Hungary and then with the views and policies that are in place in host countries such as Sweden or Germany.

We have networks of thematic cities that we can support through our «Europe for Citizens» programme. I invite the members of this working group to submit any projects they may have and to raise awareness of this programme.

I know that there is a fairly strong Andalusian representation here today. I say so as, we have quite a few projects in Andalusia supported by our «Europe for Citizens» programme.

Of course, there are other programmes that are very relevant to direct democracy at European level, and others that promote civic engagement, including volunteering.

Last September, President Juncker launched his initiative of the European Solidarity Corps. He wants young people to sign up for volunteer missions on social and humanitarian issues. It is starting to take shape. The European Commission issued its legislative proposal on the initiative at the end of May.

We already have tens of thousands of applications from young people from all over the European Union who are eager to participate in this European Solidarity Corps. President Antoine emphasised the need for youth involvement in these democratic issues and I believe that volunteering is inherent to it.

Of course, I have already mentioned the very popular «Erasmus Plus» programme, which allows young people to become aware of the European dimension of the problems we face. It is certainly useful in democratic matters.

Another point to underline is that beyond the democratic decision-making processes, which we will probably be talking about a lot this morning, to promote interactive democracy, we must realise that the content of policies also counts, and this is undeniable, at the European level. Again without wanting to point the finger at the European Union, we must admit that putting the interests of citizens at the centre of politics has finally been given more importance in recent years.

Since we are on the eve of holidays or the summer break for many of you, I will mention for example some initiatives that are directly focused on citizens. For example, roaming charges.

You probably know that since June 15 you no longer have roaming charges on your mobile phone thanks to Europe.

You are here in Belgium with your mobile subscriptions as if you were back in your home country and these are directly citizen-centric policies that have been increasingly developed at the European level.

Then you have the 112 emergency number.

Wherever you are in Europe, you can now call 112 and you will be put through to the emergency police, fire or medical services.

When it comes to the cleanliness of our beaches, now, at the European level, there is a system for monitoring the implementation of environmental standards that allows everyone to take their holidays on beaches that are increasingly clean.

When it comes to travellers' rights, when you fly, now there is a body of law that allows travellers including air passengers, to have their rights guaranteed.

I will stop the list of examples there, but just to say and illustrate the fact that democracy and putting citizens at the centre of policies is as important in terms of policy content and comes on top of the rights that have been guaranteed to these citizens at European level.

Of course, for free circulation, the proclamation of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the right to vote for all citizens in municipal or European elections in their place of residence, shared consular protection when they travel abroad, for all these rights which have been proclaimed at European level and which have been added to the rights of the citizens, it is the control of their effective implementation which is important.

The new frontier at European level as well as at national and local level, and the optimal use of new technologies and techniques to promote this direct democracy, all the measures that I have already mentioned, which I have already listed, make partial or extensive use of the new information and communication technologies to be implemented, be it open data, be it transparency, be it the European citizens' initiative or petitions.

But we can probably go a little further in this area. I would like to mention the work of one of the partners in our «Europe for Citizens» programme, which we support, the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) - a Brussels-based NGO working at pan-European level on citizenship issues, digital democracy at European level and one of their projects, in particular, aims at legislative co-productions at European level.

I'm sure that at the previous working group meeting you probably already talked about crowdsourcing, it is one of the legislative co-productions. For the moment, there has been no example at the European level. There are some quite successful examples at the local

or national level.

At the local level, for example, there is the participatory budget in Paris. At the national level, there has been the example of the co-production of nothing less than a new draft constitution in Iceland. There is no shortage of projects.

They are there and I am sure the other panellists will not fail to talk about these examples. It is probably, as I said, the new frontier at the European level in order to take decisions with citizens rather than for them.

There is an additional level of complexity, of course, at the European level, which still makes the whole endeavour quite complicated. It will be necessary to carefully choose the sectors in which to apply this legislative co-production, or in any case the legislative initiative.

ECAS believes that it would be best applied in the fields of employment or social policies, either development aid, justice, home affairs, environment, education and culture. That's not a bad start.

The question also arises as to when in the legislative process this legislative co-production will have to be applied. Is it at the moment of the initiative? This is probably the easiest to implement when writing texts or when checking their implementation? Again, this needs to be explored further.

At what level would this legislative co-production take place? At a pan-European level or at national level? Should we delegate the management of such systems at the national or perhaps the territorial level, who knows?

For the time being, we are still at the beginning of the reflection on this subject.

I will bring my speech to an end here, Mr President. It is therefore with a great deal of curiosity that I will listen to the presentations ahead, the rest of the discussions because I am sure that the European level of governance has a lot to learn from national levels and also from regional and territorial levels.

Thank you very much.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia - Thank you for this insight from the European authorities.

Presentation by Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of the eGovlab, Centre of Excellence for e-Governance (Sweden)

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia - We will turn to Mr Koulolias, Director of eGovlab, Centre of Excellence in e-Governance, who has travelled to be with us from northern Europe, Sweden.

I give the floor to Mr Koulolias.

Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of eGovlab, Centre of excellence for e-governance (Sweden).

- Hello, Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, thank you for inviting me. It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here with you today.

I hope that we will all learn from each other's experiences, which is of course essential in an open dialogue.

I will try to share with you the experience we acquired at our level, in Sweden. We are based in Stockholm and we are looking at public involvement at all levels, not only at the legislative level, but also on the basis of the challenges we have.

Many people are affected by others. For example, if you have an immigrant who goes to a new country, or someone who wants to buy a house. We will therefore try to move slightly the point of view of participating at a political level, which is of course essential, but we also want to see what end result we achieve, because we want to build trust between the public and the Government.

Once people are elected, we would expect them to produce results. To do this, the Government must work together. This is why we need a local approach, then a regional one, then national, and so on.

We observe the public and we see the challenges they are facing. We try to encourage them to start the process.

In fact we have a playground where everybody can gather. You have people who are experts in certain areas, and civil society, and the private sector is also involved. We also have research and development and, of course, the public sector.

When we look at the aspect of governance, we have certain vehicles we work with: accountability, transparency, a whole series of things that we have already discussed, Government responsiveness,

the fact of having inclusive governance. Of course, we live in a digital age, but there is a whole section of the public who are not yet actually able to use aspects of digitisation. We also have a duty to better understand this dynamic between people. We are looking at effectiveness and efficiency, obviously following the rule of law. That too is essential. Not only governance but many of these vehicles are here to build trust between Governments and the public. Participation and consensus are also key elements.

I was born in Greece and I lived in different places, then I landed in Sweden.

I know the immigration authorities in Greece and Sweden. I can go around the complete circle.

One of the crucial elements that is encouraged in Sweden is having a digital government for a smart nation. We look at the change between the 1980s and the 2000s, and the investments that have been made in Sweden, such that there is a computer in every office. Then, we look at the development of services between 2000 and 2006. Here, we really start to have online products and services for all.

If we look at Sweden's political structure, it is highly decentralised. It really takes place at the local level. In any case, it is in these places that we have the greatest number of enabling agencies and authorities. Then we also have the municipalities. Those who are closest to the people are local government. It is they who are the Swedish Government's interface.

Then we look at integration, the way it can all be integrated, so as to have more holistic services for people.

Between 2011 and 2015, as far as the Government is concerned, we no longer wanted the Government to position itself alongside the public, but work with the public. This is the arena we try and play in.

We are looking at the challenges I have shown you. We have learned how to work in a collaborative and constructive way with the public in many areas. The idea is to try and build opportunities based on public services. I will return to this later.

We also use technology to build stronger communities. Nowadays, Sweden is a very diverse country. Two years ago, we accepted more than 400,000 migrants. That's a huge percentage of the population.

The Government, if it wants to build strong

communities, must be positive about this new situation, and at different levels. It must be staggered. It must take culture, fear and risk into account. In fact, Governments do not always know how to do this. So, we start building different gateways. If you take the land registry, for example, we know who owns property. When passing it onto another person, why should we be concerned?

In fact, people must be able to make these transactions between them quite simply, without administration, without paper. This is one of the initiatives that has been launched in Sweden.

We have still a lot to do with regard to legislation on public procurement. This is one of the serious issues that we are addressing with Parliament at a European level in order to build a sustainable innovative ecosystem. We have identified certain objectives based on people's concerns. Of course, we have what we call smart buildings, smart environments and smart companies. How can we achieve a more favourable environment for businesses, including the public sector?

For example, in the food chain, if you go to a food shop you will be told that in that corner you have organic products, and so on. How can you trace all that from the farm, the producer, the processing plant, and so on? We are beginning to develop smart technology from the moment you plant the seed in the ground until the product is consumed. This whole process can be better monitored.

There is also smart health and smart education. I have an example of intelligent building I'll show you later.

We are trying to build this ecosystem based on innovations that use Government data, and Parliament is, of course, very much involved. Parliament's work is to build policies and laws. It's a full circle we have to work with. We have excellent connectivity with the executive and the judiciary, making sure that the rule of law is completely abided by.

It is therefore a full cycle. It is how we envisage the Government. Within our environment we have different government departments and different agencies that work in laboratories, and we work with them in the city of Stockholm.

In fact, in our laboratory, we are governed by Stockholm's municipal authorities. They try to involve people as much as possible. I don't know if you have ever visited Stockholm and the administrative buildings. They are moving to a

new location. They were in the old part of the city, in old buildings, and now they are leaving. How they restructure all the municipal buildings is based on being people-centric.

There will be large parts on which architects work, inviting the public to be part of the political process. So, there's this very interactive room where they can learn how to use different services. Many things are translated into different languages - it's not limited to Swedish - to better include all residents.

In practice, some of the things we do in this laboratory are indeed more digital but we also work with universities. We're not far from the University of Stockholm, and from the outset we're looking at open data and cocreation, because we can talk about co-design: the whole process of creation, the whole solution, all the challenges to be met collaboratively. The essence is based on an approach that involves all parties: universities, the public sector, the private sector, local people, because often there is no budget to do something, but the private sector can do the job initially. And then, if we make an application to the Government, it can fund it.

So initially we have saved funds, but we can continue to build from that starting point. We also have what we call applied research. At this level, we have a mandate from the Government telling us: «We would like you to work on the entire chain».

That's why it's important for us to work with the entire research and development community. We have a department with 6000 students studying science. We have 2500 graduates with master's degrees and we have another 96 who are specialised.

This means that we are working together and, at this point, we are looking at the functioning of the entire educational system. Ours is very old, I can tell you. Dare I tell you that its structures date as far back as the 14th or 15th century. They have changed little since then. We now want to consider education in a different way.

We want education to be based on the market, on society, on prospects that we'll have in the future, on our own economic objectives and on how it will evolve. It's part of the challenge facing our society. We must, of course, look at society and its functioning. We live in the European Union. This means that the European Union defines some cross-border technologies for there to be a digital single market. This a whole range of

opportunities to be grasped, and people must be aware of these.

We also operate using tests around these technologies, to see how we can be more in line with all of Europe. Whenever we build a prototype in our laboratory, its goal is to work with the countries of the North, with Germany, with Spain, with the rest of Europe. The things that come out of the laboratory are ready for the European market and not for a segmented market.

We also developed this methodology with the public involved. We did some tests. We take on the challenges people have. We often work with civil society, with industry and with companies. We identify and validate submissions. Then, we bring together this community which can deal with this four-cornered model that I mentioned earlier.

We also have innovation sessions. You know, we meet together with tables on which you can write, with toys, with everything you can imagine that is appropriate for this kind of experience. Then, we conceptualise the solution compared to the problems we are trying to solve.

We are making a short film to meet people's needs and which is based on people's needs. We then prepare the open data, and we determine what we need to build a solution. We go to all authorities, to municipal, local and regional governments and so on, and we're starting to connect the dots. We test and we verify.

Then we have another development phase with the public, which means that there is a separate room that we use after building the various prototypes. The public has the opportunity to play with these prototypes based on the challenge that they have submitted to us. We involve the various partners and this is where this coordination and co-design process continues. If it is a solution that the public sector finds interesting, it can grab hold of it. If the private sector - which is part of this undertaking - is interested, it can join the public service.

A good example of this is migration. One of the challenges that we have faced is that the front office of good numbers of our local government buildings were literally blocked by all these newcomers who, of course, did not speak Swedish and were trying to find out how to learn Swedish - which school to apply to to learn Swedish. They were also wondering what they needed to do if they were sick: where to find a doctor. How do I get to the hospital? Where do I pay my taxes?

How can I start a business?

All this represents opportunities, opportunities for government and local authorities and for society as a whole, because Sweden is a very big country, with excellent economic development, and obviously we want to continue on the same path. So, we need the public. We need to train them properly. We need to put them in the right place.

As part of this process, some people went to the phone company Telia, saying: «I would like to sell your SIM cards and your mobile phones, and then I want everything to be translated into Arabic, Somali, Farsi, English and another language that I've forgotten.» They turned to the Government. They looked the type of service most requested by newcomers. They translated it into five languages. Then they invited migrants to get one of these mobile phones.

If you come from Somalia, for example, you have special rates to call your family. This also allowed them to keep in touch with their families. Then they translated all the services. Today, at the level of the 48 municipalities who use these services, everything is done via mobile phone. And so the job has been done! They pay a single fee for the transaction. They have representatives everywhere: in Germany, in the UK, doing the same thing. They have already built it up once, and they're continuing. This is an excellent example of how, thanks to specialists in information technology, we can build new systems, create more jobs and facilitate the lives of the public, and also of institutions.

You can see a bit how it works. Everyone meets up. They have fun, they build things. There are different types of exercises. In the laboratory, there are several types of mentors, from psychology to computer science. Psychiatrists are often needed too, but that's another matter. So that's how it works.

Here are some construction elements. These are the different electronic identities that we use in Europe. We call these signatures. We encode the data only once. In general, it works. It's similar to the Estonian model.

I'll show you the video later. I'd like to talk about democracy and what we are learning. If we only explore our environment, technology is only one layer, but it ultimately doesn't have much to do with the culture we grew up in. Things change. We communicate differently because of this, but we should never forget our origins. To start off

with, in fact, we can discover a lot of things. One of the things that I discovered, for example, as a Greek person and as an Athenian, was that I was always very proud of our democratic principles until I went to Botswana and I visited tribes that are over 5,000 years old. They were always using this phrase that said that the best form of law is dialogue. They have a place they call a kgotla, which is a baobab tree. There are simply white stones placed around the tree. Each person who passes through the stone circle has a voice equal to the others. Whether you are a woman, a man, a young man, an elderly person, it makes no difference. The chief will listen to you and the entire community will respect this.

We said to each other that if the kgotla has been practised for so long, western democracies should have a lot to learn from certain tribal democracies. We do this in several ways. This was transferred here and there. In fact, we knew it existed. This is where all the chiefs are. This consensus is sought. There is a process of deliberation to reach community decisions. There is traditional democracy in many parts of the world. Then, there is so-called western democracy where there is a parliament, representatives and elected officials. It's a parallel system to the various traditional systems that used to exist.

What would happen if we were to merge the two? If we had to take the elements of one and merge them with the others? In the kgotla, people are listened to. If we take the challenges facing a country and bring them to the level of a kgotla, what would happen? In fact, it was very interesting. The people are really engaged. We used all sorts of technologies. So, there is a legislative item, a piece of legislation that has been introduced. It was published in the kgotla by the person in charge. Don't forget that with districts in Botswana, for example, a district is a little bigger than France but with two million people, the population of Latvia. The distances are huge and quite different. There was a forum of experts, they developed it within the kgotla to see how they would respond to Parliament.

I get the impression that it's quite similar to what is happening here in Wallonia with the citizen panel. Then, it was adopted by the kgotla. Suddenly, the Parliament and Members of Parliament had the chiefs' blessings. In reality, if the chiefs give a thumbs-down, the Member of Parliament won't be re-elected at the next election. Ways had to be found to stay in touch. Then, there was communication to the MPs and then communication to the Parliament. They finally moved the Parliament under the Baobab Tree.

They also began to re-engage young people through social networks. The National Assembly found this very interesting. Margaret Nasha, a very dynamic lady, told me when we met that the children had to be taken to a digital kgotla. So this is what we have been trying to do.

All young people have Facebook, social networks and discuss loads of things, and eventually lost interest in traditions. We started to put systems and networks into the kgotla. Originally, text messaging was used. If you had a problem, you'd send a text. Then, a case management system was created. Each concern of the kgotla was recorded and communicated to the Members of Parliament which was, at that time, responsible to the kgotla for concerns. Here too, the chief was to send it to the Executive, saying it had to be dealt with otherwise it won't happen.

Finally, there was a deliberative platform where everyone sat and could discuss topics and the opinions they had of each other. This is what the citizens' forums would look like. People gather and discuss. There have also been telecentres and kgotla meetings. That's a little bit what it was like.

In Parliament, we started to build different support systems because in the end we were sent a lot of data, so it had to be translated into local languages. It had to be translated into Kalanga and other languages so that people can understand and engage. So that's the story. Here's Margaret Nasha.

The project is still underway. The Government has changed, but several regions in Africa are still doing it. We learned a lot, and a lot of what we learned in Africa, in Botswana, and the kgotla system is what we are trying to reinstate now in our project in Sweden. Solutions are not usually one of the usual suspects.

Thank you for your attention.

Presentation by Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens (France)

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - We will leave Botswana to return to Paris. We will now have the pleasure of hearing from Ms Clara Boudehen, who is the General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens in France, a highly original and extremely attractive initiative.

Thank you to our speakers. May I take this opportunity to remind you that they are at your disposal for any questions, suggestions, criticisms or perhaps further explanations regarding their presentations.

I feel like one of those news presenters waiting for the film of the report to arrive but who doesn't have it yet, but don't worry it will be with you one second now, as the saying goes.

Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens (France) - Hello everyone, thank you very much for extending the invitation to our association and for your interest in our approach. We had lively discussions in Paris and I hope we will be able to have others today.

My name is Clara Boudehen, I've been General Delegate of the association for only two months, when it was created, but I have been with the association for three years already. I entered the French Government for a short time as advisor to the Minister of Digital on the topics of participation, open data and public innovation, how to make citizens interact in public action in general.

I will therefore introduce you to Parlement & Citoyens. It is a platform that allows Members of Parliament and citizens to write the law together. To give you a better idea, I will present a small video* that is quite interactive. For the non-French speakers among you, don't worry it's not that long.

This is a project that was born four years ago in France. We felt that there was a growing feeling of mistrust towards politicians. During the last elections, it was even worse, because in France we had a 57.4% abstention rate in the legislative elections. So we said: «And yet the Members of Parliament are the people who represent us at the end of the day.» Fifty-seven percent, that means that more than half of the French population who abstained in the French elections We feel that this problem is still there and we will try to solve it.

* Link to the video (in French only): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adedEG6WnvCk>

In Europe, it's about the same, because 53% of Europeans do not feel that their voice is being heard at the European level.

I'll describe how things stood when we decided to launch the project.

Our feeling was that, as citizens, we clearly didn't feel that we could have access to the institutions. We can send an email, etcetera, but I have never been to the National Assembly, I have never been to the Senate, I cannot really participate.

So we do not feel as if our voice is being heard. We do not feel that our opinion matters when it comes to bills of law. We also have the impression that certain lobbies or interest groups can influence the law, but we do not really know what's going on, because maybe they are taking action, but we do not really know. The process is not open. In any case, at the National Assembly, we do not have the impression of being aware of what's really going on. Now there are videos of the commissions meeting, so it's becoming clearer, but at that time we were not really aware of it yet.

So we said: «We're going to see the elected representatives, because they really have to listen to us». Then, on the side of elected representatives, the Members of Parliament, it was the opposite: «In fact, I listen to citizens, I'm on Twitter, I receive insults on Twitter. I answer them on Facebook. I also answer by email. I'm at the market, I go out there to talk to people. I listen to the citizens all the time.» In fact, we wondered why the dialogue wasn't effective when it seems as if everyone wants to enter into a dialogue about the topics that concern them.

The solution we put forward was to set up this digital platform. For us, digital technology is only a tool for creating a physical debate. This tool makes it possible to resume the dialogue, that is, to make the process more transparent, to see the diversity of opinions and also to have a real dialogue on very concrete subjects.

It is important for us to focus on concrete elements, otherwise it's just shambles. Politicians in general are criticised, you have the impression that citizens are no longer interested in politics, but when you work on very concrete subjects, you realise that everyone can dialogue and voice an opinion. That's how Parlement & Citoyens came about.

I will tell you our story, our creation. In 2008, in France, there was a constitutional reform that allowed Members of Parliament to launch a legislative initiative. Before then, only the

Government could give the topic of the law; now, Members of Parliament can do it. We realised they did not have a lot of teams, just one or two assistants. So, it's really very little to put together a law. We decided that we would equip them, provide them with citizen expertise, experts, etc. So we created this first platform.

In 2013, the platform was launched with six Members of Parliament from each party. That is to say from the far left, the communists, the socialist party, the centre, the right and the far right, also with the Le Pen family. Everyone was truly represented. There were six Members of Parliament of six different shades of political opinion. What happened was that everyone did a consultation that worked more or less well.

I would like to tell you the story of Joël Labbé, the senator that we see in the video. In fact, Joël Labbé is a senator from Morbihan, Brittany. It was his first term; he had never been elected and therefore wasn't necessarily very familiar with how the assembly worked. He wasn't an old hack at the political game, so to speak.

In his commune, he rolled out an experiment to ban pesticides, in other words, they no longer used pesticides in his commune. He told himself: «It's been working really well back home for five years, I'm going to try to roll it out throughout France». He joined Parlement and Citoyens. At first, his proposal was only two or three rather simple articles putting a ban on pesticide use in the communes. With our help, and that of associations, he managed to mobilise quite a large community of citizens; we brought together 900 citizens who started to input their expertise, their opinion: «I live next to a lake and pesticides also have an impact on fish.»

Everyone came with their little local expertise and we had, in particular, beekeepers who take care of the bees, and instead of questioning the president of the beekeepers of France, they interviewed more than 400 beekeepers from all over France, each time taking a particular local situation into account.

When he walked into the chamber, Joël Labbé was not known at all; he is not a Member of Parliament who normally has a very strong profile. But there, with his proposal, he had with him 900 committed citizens who followed the debate live on television, and who, above all, had an expectation from him and who were waiting to see the result. This law was passed unanimously in both Chambers, with discussions of course, but in the end, it was voted unanimously. And it

is interesting to note that today they are working on a proposal for a European resolution. Now, it is moving to the European level; so from the scale of the commune, we have moved to the national scale and now to the European scale. Each time by joining forces with the citizens, he succeeds in building on his idea and, in addition, escalating it to a higher level.

This experience, at first, was a bit of a prototype. Parlement & Citoyens was an experiment. Then we thought: «It really is working, let's try and develop it and go even further.» We generalised our platform, we reinforced it, we developed it electronically to make it more effective and we decided to open it to more Members of Parliament. Under the last five year Presidential term, we had brought 30 Members of Parliament from all political opinions on board. Several laws were passed, two of them by the Government: the Biodiversity Law, carried by Ségolène Royal, the Minister of the Environment, with 9,000 people and the Digital Republic Law, the most important; 21,000 people participated. That had real impacts on the legal text, because in fact we had a text with 30 articles. There were five new articles on topics that were under the radar completely, i.e., a topic about researchers who could not access online data because they need a search engine that processes data, metadata, very quickly. It wasn't at all part of our intention when writing the law. There was also, for example, video game players, eSport. It wasn't recognised in France; it was considered a lottery game because in fact they were making money through an online action on the Internet. So it was penalised, which meant they had huge fees and taxes, whereas for them it was their job. Small one-off situations like this, which were very important for interest groups, emerged through the consultation.

There are also articles of law; of the 30 articles, there were 90 significant changes that had an impact in the text. On the platform, we have the text and then we can cross out, add things, as suggested changes on Word, we cross out, we add, etcetera. There we had five new articles, 90 changes. The law has arrived; the citizen impact was very significant and taken into account by the Government.

I would say that in the whole approach adopted by Parlement & Citoyens, the key is to secure collaboration between Members of Parliament and citizens, that is to say, there is an undertaking on the part of both parties. Citizens and members of parliament sign the same charter. Together, they make an undertaking: the citizens to participate, to give their opinion, to respect the opinion of

the Members of Parliament, and the Members of Parliament to propose laws for consultation, when they are elected, and especially, to take into account the citizens' opinions, that is to say, give their opinion on «yes, no, will I take up this idea?». This double undertaking is very strong in our community.

The last step is scaling up. There are dates; there are many texts, but it is the dates in particular that matter. In 2017, we created the association, we experimented for a long time, then we strengthened the system and we really experimented on a large scale, with the Government, with 21,000 people and we saw that it worked very well. There are other laws that I won't mention, but in all, we have drafted five laws on the platform.

Now, we have created an association to stabilise the project, in the sense that we are citizens, so we are doing all this in good faith, but who knows who will be heading this association in five years' time, and we don't know whether these citizens will be in good faith.

So we entrusted our project to a board of directors, a multi-stakeholder governance, that is to say a governance with Members of Parliament from all parties, for example: Luc Belot comes from the Socialists, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet is Republican.

Then there are the citizens - the citizens are drawn, so they have their membership in the association and they can be drawn all over France.

There are also the well-known personalities, including Loïc Blondiaux, whom you already know, Jean-Paul Delevoye who was president of the EESC, and so personalities who have an impact, who know their way around.

There are also companies and organisations, including the CFDT, which is one of the largest French trade unions today. In fact, they used our method to co-construct their internal governance. They saw that their trade union (in France, the unionisation rate stands at about 6% of employees, whereas before, in the 1950s, 50% or 80% of people were involved in their union) was losing ground and they did not feel close to their trade union members, their activists. So they decided to reinvolve them. Instead of having a pyramid governance, thanks to the platform, they can directly ask all the grassroots activists what they think, each in his role. It is important to have the president who decides at the end, but at least you can interview all those people who are

at the grassroots and who normally voice their concerns by section, by federation. This makes it possible to breathe new life into the pyramid organisation of the CFDT.

There are also foundations and associations - the Colibris, the Nicolas Hulot Foundation. They are French associations, but carry considerable clout; local communities, because for us, it is also important to have the feedback of territories and leaders at the local level and French administrations and advisory organisations. The administrations are specific to the public debate in France and then you have the founder, Cyril Lage, who founded Parlement & Citoyens.

These are our convictions and our values. I think it's really very important to say where we stand in relation to the power and the citizens. Our goal is not to look for a scapegoat, not to level blame and say that they are all rotten, but rather to try to work together to move towards something better. We have three main values. First, we value representative democracy and not direct democracy. We want to have representatives, we want to have Members of Parliament who decide for us, but we want them to listen to us from time to time on topics or, in fact, have the opportunity to express ourselves. We do not want to run things in their place, I think they do it very well, it's more to be able to challenge them as a citizen.

In the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the sentence goes: «The law is the expression of the general will, all citizens have the right to participate personally or through their representatives». In France, it is actually written that it is «personally or through their representatives». In reality, everything tends to go through our representatives and there, we would like to give a new impetus, create a new possibility of also being able to participate personally.

The second value is the search for diversity of ideas. We are not here to represent what the French think, but we want to have lots of ideas, lots of opinions, a maximum. It's a kind of crowdsourcing of ideas, a bit like what Mr Koulolias was talking about, we're going to try to crowdsource ideas so that those who lead us can then make an informed decision, on the basis of the different opinions that emerge in society or not.

Third, transparency and participation are inseparable. If people are asked to participate, the process and the result must be transparent. Conversely, if we strive for the transparency, for

example, of parliamentary activity, if we just see what they are doing well or what they are doing wrong, but if we cannot participate ourselves, for us, that's not the way to go. There must be transparency and participation together to ensure a healthy dialogue between the two.

I will show you now how it works.

We use a fairly simple method. It all starts with the signing of the charter of undertaking by the Members of Parliament. Today, we have 40 Members of Parliament, that is, 30 new members who were elected two weeks ago, and 10 senators who have been with us for three years now. Each time, there is a proposer who makes an undertaking, in other words there is a Member of Parliament who personally undertakes to propose the law and to be answerable to the citizens at the end. It is their choice, they are a Member of Parliament, they want to request the opinions of the citizens, they are not forced to do so at any time. Often they want to make the undertaking and be answerable at the end. If citizens take part for two or three hours in something online, in the law, it's difficult, and so on. They have no response to their participation, it is often quite difficult.

Our consultation procedure involves several steps.

The first step is to put the text or ideas online and the opinions and expertise of the citizens are gathered.

In a second step, we, Parlement & Citoyens, make a synthesis of the proposals, that is to say an overview tree. There were ideas on that. Then this idea gives rise to three opinions: rather this one, this one or that one. This makes it possible not to give too much value for example to an opinion which is too strong, which could be for example expressed by a lobby or a very strong community.

For example, Facebook posts something on our platform, they will have a lot of likes, a lot of things to say, but does that mean that their opinion is it more important than others? I'm not sure.

By doing an overview tree, it allows us to put all the ideas on the same footing and thus to have a diversity of opinions, but not opinions which are stronger than others under the influence of lobbies.

We know they are stronger, we will take it into account, but it is important that we do not only see the big lobbies appearing in the final solution.

For example, on the digital law, we had Uber, eBay, Facebook and Twitter participating. Of course, they had huge communities, so their opinion seemed much more important, but in the end, it was not necessarily visible and it was taken into account like the others.

Then the official answer. It is the return of the Member of Parliament who made the undertaking to the citizens, it is the moment of response. After this moment of response, as you can see in the video, we organise a small adversarial debate. It is often physically in a room like this or digitally so that the entire community that participated can follow the debate online.

This is really the moment of response. We will choose topics that have been debated and we will fine tune them by interacting live. On some points, sometimes it's good to explain yourself and to have the time to talk about details.

Then comes the decision. The Member of Parliament comes back to the citizens to announce what he has chosen: «I have not retained these arguments because legally it is not possible, because it is the responsibility of the European Commission, ...» He gives his arguments, but at least the citizen who participated knows what has been done with their opinion. They know what the situation is. They know why they participated.

In concrete terms, this is what the site looks like. This is a law on prisons, the one that was presented to you, Mr President, when you came to Paris: how to make prison useful? The subject of prisons is quite sensitive in France because there are too many inmates and not enough prisons. So, how to make prison useful? How to invent a new solution for prisons?

You can see that there are 800 contributions and 260 participants. We see in blue that the theme is security. Dominique Raimbourg submitted the proposal. You can share and so on.

We see the steps on the side: the presentation, the consultation, the synthesis of ideas, as I presented it to you, the debate and the bill. Each time, you can click and follow the entire process.

That is, if you arrive later than the consultation, even today if you want to know what has been said about prisons, you can always go back and follow the whole debate. Each time there are small explanatory videos.

The most interesting is to present how the argument works. There are ideas. Dominique

Raimbourg has posted an idea, we see it: which citizen answered? Those who agree, disagree? When we click on the proposal, there are always arguments below that range from, «for» to «against».

The observation that we make with this is that someone who is for the proposal puts «for» and then he goes away, he agrees. On the other hand, someone who is against will say why he is against. If we leave only the comments, we get the impression that there are many people who are against and when we put the votes plus the comments, it really helps to give a very representative vision of what the participating citizens think. It also allows us to improve things.

Often, people who put the «mixed» proposal, for example, in orange are much more regularly involved in the construction. That is, they will try to improve the text: “Something is missing from the existing text or I would like to add something». That is how it is built. After that we do the synthesis. This is the next step.

You can also see that the Member of Parliament can participate in the same way as the citizens, they have the same status, but they have a small yellow frame, unlike the citizen, at the bottom. They have a yellow frame to make it stand out, but in theory we put them on an equal footing, at this point in the debate anyway.

Now, I will quickly present our projects, in France anyway, because it was the stage of the website. So everything was going well, we had physical debates, etcetera. We found that it was not enough, that we had to go a little further. So we created the civic consultation, it's a suggestion box on our site where citizens put legislative ideas. Starting from 5,000 votes, the proposal is sent to the 40 participating Members of Parliament.

For example, I will send 10 proposals a month or so. One day, I send all 10 proposals at once and the Members of Parliament must say: «Yes, I would like to take it up» or «No, I would not like to take it up», and each time specify why. At least they have feedback from 40 different people. Citizens do not feel that they are being heard - for example, as one might have on a petition: sometimes we have 100,000 votes, 1 or 2 million votes; in France, there were 2 million people who signed the petition against the labour law, which was under discussion, which was much debated, and despite 2 million people, there was no response from the political level. It was very frustrating, it triggered demonstrations and strikes.

We don't need such a high threshold. Our goal is for people to have quick answers to their proposals. Five thousand votes is a small threshold, but 5 to 10 proposals a month or so for the Members of Parliament who are involved, it's not too difficult to deal with. It is feasible and citizens have an answer quickly. If they ask the same question, (because it happens: the Parti animaliste, for example, constantly raises the question of animal rights) we refer them to the proposal that has already been voted. We say: "We will not resubmit the same proposal to the Members of Parliament. They have already answered, go see their answer here." It allows us to move forward too. We are not going to be constantly asked by the same types of people. We will always have new ideas.

The second thing is the creation of an observatory of parliamentary practices. In fact, we recently realised, during the elections, when we called candidates on the phone when they joined, that they told us: «Yes, I want to join, I really like your project because I do it locally too. I've set up a citizen jury, I've set up a citizen panel». We thought that with all the information they give us, we should be able to share it. So we will create a map, a large map of France with all the initiatives and also try to create sometimes working groups, as can be done here, to share best practices. We can see that good ideas here can also work there, that some are in their infancy while others are tried and tested. As a result, all these exchanges can try to improve things. There it is more of a two-year horizon. We're not going to do it right now because we have other projects, but it's really something we would like to do.

Our project for this summer is to create a network of ambassadors. The ambassador is a citizen by department - in France we have about 100 departments - who is the local relay of this consultation that is taking place on Parlement & Citoyens. They will organise a legislative debate at local level. We have a methodology for organising debates - it's a small online kit, downloadable - and they are responsible for organising the debate and for reporting what was said on the platform. This allows all those who do not have access to the Internet or who are a little removed from political life, in working class neighbourhoods where they do not necessarily speak French very well, people who will not dare to post their idea on the site, to also participate and share their ideas.

Then, we also have interactive videos that can reach audiences who are not comfortable with writing or not comfortable with French. This is the third project and it is really what we will develop

this summer with the help of citizen associations that have been involved with us for some time.

I will tell you now what we would like to do or at least where we are with Europe. There are things under discussion. The first is the "Forum de Demain" or the «Forum of Tomorrow». I don't know if you saw the film Demain which was made by Mélanie Laurent and Cyril Dion, which is quite interesting. It covers five themes for the future, including democracy, the economy and agriculture. It's a film that has had a big impact, at least in France and elsewhere in Europe. They will create a large-scale forum, the «Forum of Tomorrow» and the goal - it is still under discussion, because we do not know if it will be in 2017 or 2018 - is for our platform to put together five legislative proposals in collaboration with the European Commission, this time on the five themes (economy, agriculture, etcetera).

We will try to see what this leads to. It has never been done at European level yet, but it is really a goal we hope to achieve.

If I am here today, it is also to tell you that we are quite ready to experiment in your regional parliaments too. We worked at the level on a national parliament, but we would learn a lot from doing it with regional parliaments, in Andalusia, in Lombardy, and so on, because each parliament has its own specificities, its own way of functioning, even the Azores; if you meet only one week a month, for example, the rest of the time it also makes it possible to create a stronger bond too. So we have a lot to learn about all parliaments to try to improve what we do and especially to try to create communities across Europe that can participate.

A short recap of what we've done. The map you see here is about the «Faisons la loi/Let's Make the Law» campaign.

On a personal note, three years ago, I was a volunteer in the summer, I called Members of Parliament and I spent two months trying to get an answer. I had three appointments with them to get them to say: «Okay, I'm willing to make the law with you.» After two or three weeks, three appointments, phone calls, etcetera, it was an uphill struggle. Now, we feel that there has really been a cultural change - in France anyway - with the elections, the digital evolution. In two weeks - it's really very little - 250 legislative candidates have signed up, so it's all this map of France, where you see the dark green, it means that there are several in the same place. Two hundred and fifty candidates have made an undertaking to

say: «Yes, I want to involve citizens when I write my law, their expertise and their opinion matter to me». Of these 250 candidates, there were 25 elected representatives from different parties again, many from the party En Marche!, which is the party of Emmanuel Macron, but there are other parties too.

The «new» news - and that's what I'm going to be working on this afternoon - is that the first law of the Macron Government will be discussed on our platform from next Monday. So I think we will be working hard this weekend to mobilise the associations, the community, the major opinion formers, the media, etcetera, to ensure that as many people as possible participate and especially people with different opinions. It is always a question of looking for small different communities to try to have a diversity of opinions.

This law addresses democratic renewal to restore public confidence in public action - we told ourselves we really had to do it, it's important for us - and that's from Monday.

I thank you very much for being so attentive and I am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - Thank you Madam. I think for many it was a very practical discovery on the scale of a country, moreover a large country and a national assembly. No doubt there will be a lot of questions and expressions of interest.

Testimony of Mr Stéphane Quain, member of the Citizen Panel on the challenges of ageing (Belgium / Wallonia)

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - We return after Botswana and Paris, more prosaically to our own little Wallonia with not an expert, not a politician, but a citizen, but who has discovered the first two facets.

It is with great pleasure that I give the floor to Mr Stéphane Quain.

Mr Stéphane Quain, member of the Citizen Panel organised by the Parliament of Wallonia on the challenges of ageing (Belgium/Wallonia). - Thank you, Mr President. Thank you, Mr President of the CALRE, ladies and gentlemen, whatever your qualifications and credentials.

I must confess that I am quite excited about presenting the experience I was lucky enough to have as an ordinary citizen.

Indeed, we were 30 to have been selected according to precise criteria to have a representative sample of the Walloon population.

Our work was, in four days, to deal with a subject that is complex in terms of its scope and impact on our future and to produce a brief and present it to the Government.

I'm not going to give you a step-by-step account of how that went, but maybe tell you about the more striking elements of those days when we had the privilege of working in this Parliament.

On the first day, we were first introduced to the infrastructure, the functioning of the Parliament, the help available to us, the subject and the objectives to be achieved.

The day was really busy and in the end we realised that we had not been able to present ourselves. At first, we asked ourselves a little bit about whether it was good or bad and, on reflection, I think it was something positive; we were ordinary citizens, with our ambitions, our desires and our life experiences and there was absolutely no societal barrier.

On the second day, we really got to the heart of the matter. We met experts in sociology, followed by philosophers and university professors, each specialized in their field, who gave us a structured and filtered down short course in order to understand the implications that we would face.

In order to optimise this work, we also received proposals from these same experts, other citizens who had participated on the platforms as well as proposals from the different parties.

For this reason, on the third day, for practical reasons, we divided the group in two.

It seemed much easier for us to express ourselves in small groups to have frank discussions and quicker reactions.

When we came back to this same room, where we were able to compare our different reflections and we realised that we had used two different methods.

What was the first method? Questions were grouped according to their convergence, given a weighting, and we chose those to which the majority adhered. These convergences were reformulated and subsequently led to hypotheses. In the end, the next step was to identify implementation strategies to achieve the goal.

After the explanations provided by the second group, on all the questions, we found that they had worked in more of a general environment. They thoroughly analysed the different proposals and drew up a global text on the answers.

The methodology for the reorganisation, the strategy to be developed was quite similar to ours. This is what I found absolutely extraordinary, that these two approaches arrived at an identical prioritization of the issue at hand and common strategies.

At first, I must admit that I was a little perplexed when we started this experience, saying that there was going to be so many differences, so many difficulties to mix all the information, to process and find solutions. But on the second day, when we received the results of this work that we did together, I was quite confident that we would achieve our goal.

We obviously did not present a precise implementation, but rather a breadcrumb trail, intended to mark the milestones along the path. Practical arrangements must be dealt with by specialised multidisciplinary teams over much longer periods. We nevertheless arrived at a spontaneous consensus without any external interaction. I really want to emphasise this point: we were not influenced by anyone, we worked with each other, we were guided, but absolutely not oriented.

Subsequently, the group naturally co-opted some members to write this report that we were going to present.

This writing phase lasted almost a week. During this week, each member of the panel could contact us in order to, according to their reflections, their readings, perhaps shed new light on this famous consensus brief. In short, what did we do? We put the brief on a site and it evolved each day according to the reflections. We had a forum, discussions and everyone could contribute their clarification; not in order to change the consensus, just to ensure a clearer way of explaining it.

It appeared to us, however, that had we had one or two more days, it might have made it easier for us. On the other hand, because each time we had pros and cons, the fact of having to respect this tight schedule forced us to remain succinct and focused on the subject. We could not head off on tangents and get lost on auxiliary questions.

I will arrive at the fourth day, the famous day of the presentation. We were ready, we thought, a bit like an oral exam and I have no doubt that this will bring back some memories for you. It is true that having to present, as ordinary citizens who are not used to standing in front of such an experienced audience who have the gift of the gab, could have been quite an intimidating experience. For that, we were very lucky in the sense that we had Mr President, Mr Antoine here present who, thanks to his pedagogy, helped us a lot by breaking with the codes.

It may seem trivial, but for us breaking with the codes was really reassuring. We could focus on the substance. We were made to feel at home during this time. We were among our own, with other citizens. We knew that we were dealing with ministers and members of Parliament, but it was an open discussion. We were also guided by Mr Destatte from the Destree Institute and Ms Van Doren, who were our guides and our coaches, but who, during this famous fourth day, stayed behind the scenes after having prepared us to present our subject.

The presentation and content were done quite naturally by the editors, at first. An important element is that it was not just an explanation, a presentation, a reading of a text that had been written, but a real desire to explain and participate in this democracy. Moreover, the ensuing debate really showed that, while the group reached a consensus by reflecting on pragmatic solutions, no one had left aside their own sensibilities.

That was the group experience.

As far as my personal experience is concerned - and I was very happy to hear all the previous interventions, because we come to the same conclusions and equivalent situations - when I arrived here in Parliament as a private citizen, for me, parliament was people talking to each other, spawning laws that were not always appropriate to the situation. And then, I did not really know how it all took place.

Here, when I arrived, the first thing I noticed was how the laws were prepared; the second thing was to realise that there was a lot of work behind the scenes; and ultimately, access to publications I did not even know existed. There is a lot of information that we can get hold of, a lot of things that we can analyse and on which we could have our own opinions.

The other interesting aspect was for our elected representatives, who were able to realise the messages that were getting across, or not getting across, measure somehow the quality of the communication. There are some proposals at the beginning that were made by the citizen panel and where we realised that this already existed. It's a bit of a shame because people who even worked in the field in this area were not even aware that it existed. From that point of view I find that it has also been positive that communication can be strengthened by much simpler means.

My feeling is that I see a real hope and a dynamic among the population via this type of action, because we feel concerned and involved. Our advantage is that our position, outside socio-political contingencies, may allow us to have a more pragmatic and straightforward approach. I sincerely believe that - in any case, here in Wallonia, and I do not doubt that it happens elsewhere in the same way - we can participate actively in democracy with a positive spirit, wisdom and especially prudence.

I would also like to thank our elected representatives, who allowed us to express ourselves and who have also made us aware of something that seems important to me: it is that this famous gap between the citizens and the leaders can be crossed. In this case, it has been very clearly.

I could have talked to you for hours about everything that happened. So much happened at the human level and at the practical level. Many of us have kept in touch with each other.

We continue to have our thoughts on different topics.

Two images were really memorable for me.

That of three of our ministers who seemed really satisfied. There was no more talk of conflicts but a shared satisfaction of having spent a pleasant moment.

Finally, the last image is that of our panel, which was really motivated by its mission and via which I hope that, with this project, we will have sent a message saying that it could really make us go beyond our borders and that we could really extend this project far beyond our Region.

Thank you. If you have questions, depending on the organisation, I will be more than happy to answer.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia - On the sidelines of Mr Quain's brilliant speech, I would like to remind you that he is not at all politically active. He is not at all a political representative hiding in the skin of an ordinary citizen. He really was - if I dare say it - drawn at random.

Perhaps a little more information for the politicians we are: what was the procedure we adopted in Parliament here? First, it is a decision that was made, by majority and opposition, in the Bureau of the Assembly. It was not the decision of a president, a government. This is the will of all political groups. Then we decided to organise an opinion poll prior to the setting up of the panel. We interviewed about 1,100 Walloons, which was already a very reliable reference statistically. We asked them about a whole series of subjects, with - it is true, in my eyes - results that were sometimes very surprising, far from what we could have suspected.

For example, for one of the questions about the challenge of ageing, we asked our fellow citizens about euthanasia, in short, asked them if they wanted to be in control - Mr Quain can tell you - of how they ended their life. We were very surprised to learn that 80% of our fellow citizens were in favour. So it was very far from what we could imagine.

This survey was conducted. Of the 1,100 people, there was one last question: Are you willing to participate in a citizen panel? The interviewee was randomly selected to have 1,100 people who, statistically, represented all of Wallonia, the different regions, men, women, young, old,

graduates, less qualified. In short, all the usual parameters of a survey.

We then removed from these 1,100 people those who volunteered. Of course, it was then necessary - forgive me the expression Mr Quain - to sort to find a square root, that is to say, an extract of these 1 100 people, to find 30 who represented the same logic of representativeness.

On the fringes of this, we organised an audiovisual approach that introduced the citizen panel and was an audiovisual approach in the form of a «smart vox populi», that is to say that it is not a camera that interviewed people in the street. No. We also tried to cover the whole of Wallonia to show the panellists that we could free up speech.

So it was also a form of interpellation, from citizens to other citizens.

Third element: we were accompanied by a scientific committee. They are the famous philosophers, economists, etcetera, and we took care to take these scientists from all the universities of our Region. So, you know, we have universities that are state universities, but we also have denominational universities and non-denominational universities. There too, there was a desire to find a diversity in the opinion of the academic.

All the universities were represented because obviously the approach on this or that theme could not be concordant, but it gave a scientific basis to the approach.

Finally, the last point is the «coaches», as you said, Mr Quain. It was very difficult because you had to find people who knew the political workings, who knew how to talk in public and who could arouse reactions, but without conditioning them. Someone to light the barbecue so to speak. Someone to get the flame going ... Without choosing what was going on the grill.

There we had a lot of luck with the Destree Institute. It is a pluralistic scientific institute where all political currents are represented.

This is the approach that preceded the arrival here of the citizen panel. I want to say to our colleagues in the various assemblies that of the 30, unfortunately, we had a withdrawal from a person for a reason that is not known to us, and although they said they would be there, this person didn't turn up. No matter, there were 29 left.

Our fear - that of the Secretary General, myself and others - is that as the debates dried up, we

would lose some of them, that they would say no, this isn't for me. Mr Quain won't mind me saying that after the first day, I heard a lot of people say, it's so tiring, it's not that easy, it's a long, we have a lot to learn.

So there was not a discouragement, but awareness of the difficulty of political work. It was already a first step of the citizen towards the elected representative, where the tendency is often to say: they don't understand, they don't decide, what do politicians do, we just see them on TV. No. They had already measured the intensity, the difficulty, but also the preparation involved.

I would like to add to a single point that Mr Quain has already addressed in a very relevant way. We opted for four days over a one-month period. We obviously had the debate about whether or not it was enough. You had it too. My only comment was: if you want more days, it is you who are in control of your calendar, a little like the Members of Parliament. If it is necessary to convene a commission or an assembly, decide it.

So they had this debate between them. With the evaluation, an extra day might be needed, but not more, not much more. I say it for those who would like to take inspiration from the model, we should not stretch it out too much in time because otherwise, of course, we lose the fervour of the group that is putting in all this effort.

What I wanted to add about Mr Quain's testimony is that beyond those four days, they read a great deal and made a lot of inquiries. They created a community on the Internet to share their impressions. Some were very talkative, very committed. Others a little less, but that is human nature.

So they also discovered - for us parliamentarians, it's normal - that before being to say anything intelligent you have to do the necessary background work. Here too, it was perhaps a new step for them.

As far as breaking with the codes is concerned, when we express ourselves, we always use certain forms of address: "Mr Minister...". «Sometimes, when we do not have the right answers, tempers flare and there are other appreciations.

Here we decided not to say «Mr Minister», not to say «Mr President», but to use the first names of the ministers. So, it's a detail, but it was a way of breaking with the codes to show that, conversely, an elected representative, even a minister, is still a citizen. He still has a first name, he still has a

surname. The image you have seen of laughter is because in the assembly - Philippe will understand me and Alexander too - we never say to the head of government: Paul, Maxime, Pierre-Yves. This is not a parliamentary tradition.

We only did it at that time. Everyone played the game and the ministers were very surprised to be called by their first name, but it also made it possible to find an identical level between citizens and elected representatives. For me, it was the most effective means of breaking with the codes.

Breaking with the codes was also when they created the subgroup, they did not try to divided up according to their affinities, ideological sensibilities, diplomas because they did not know each other, in fact . That's what Mr Quain said earlier. They didn't have time to present themselves. Nobody could say: «Hello, my name is Stéphane Quain, here is my diploma, here is my function, here is my origin».

If we had removed this last mask, immediately, there are spontaneous affinities that are created: «I'll go along with that one, that one is closer to diploma, region, social class, etcetera». They could not do it. Between us, I was very angry - the Clerk knows it - because I told myself: but we still have to let them present themselves, to tell each other who they are.

I was wrong. By leaving them anonymous, simple citizens, without prejudices, finally here too we broke with the codes since everyone was equal to the other and there was not a look saying: «Look here, I'm an academic, what does this gentleman do?»

Regarding the cost of the operation, we paid about 205 euros a day to our panellists plus travel expenses. Why these 205 euros? This corresponds to allowances that are commonly paid in other institutions in our country and because we also wanted to tell them that political work deserves a salary. Today, we hear a lot of people say: men and women politicians should work for nothing. There too, we wanted to break with the codes by saying: no. When you take a day off your work, you should also get a salary. For the entire operation, the survey, the audiovisual, the indemnities and the scientific committee, it cost about 120,000 euros.

Of course, we can still consider that it's a lot, it's too much, but I can say, and I support Mr Quain's point, that for us it was extremely stimulating and - if he permits - I would say it was co-motivating. It was motivating for us, the elected representatives,

to hear the citizens and also for the citizens to see the elected representatives reach out to them.

We hope to be able to renew the operation next year with one last commitment we made to them: to follow up. We made the undertaking to meet with them in a year's time to say: «The suggestions, the list of demands you left us, what have we done with them?» Of course, this evaluation phase is necessary.

That's it, I don't want to go on much longer. Mr Quain, if I twisted the fact something, say it, you would be right to censor me, my dear Stéphane, do not hesitate. So much for how the procedure was coordinated.



EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AND BEST PRACTICES ON INTERACTIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE CALRE MEMBER ASSEMBLIES

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - Ladies and Gentlemen, you have been attentive, patient, interested. This is the time for you to ask any questions.. Our four experts - I hold you up as experts - are at your disposal.

Who wishes to speak? I simply ask you to specify which parliament you represent, so we can identify ourselves.

I give the floor to Mr Courard.

Mr Philippe Courard, President of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. - I will set the ball rolling. I am president of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. This is the Parliament of the French-speakers of Belgium.

I wanted to come back to the various interventions, particularly Ms Boudehen's. In relation to those people who are involved, who are consulted, can she tell us more about this panel of citizens? I sometimes have the impression, when organising citizen meetings in a small municipality, that it always tends to be same ones who experiment, who participate and who come. How representative are these people really? Are not they supercitizens? What do we do with all those who do not speak, who do not come along, who do not feel concerned? You mentioned it with the French presidential election. When it came to choosing a president for five years, when it was also about positioning oneself against a far-right candidate who was excessively dangerous, almost 60% did not feel concerned, did not come, were not compelled to act in the face of an essential practical exercise, fundamental for their future.

How to try to involve the voiceless, those who never speak? How to take this into account? I believe that, as a politician, even if they do not come to you, even if they do not speak, even if they are given the opportunity and they do not take advantage of it, we must still be able to represent them, we must nevertheless be able to take them into account.

The second question was precisely in relation to the National Front. You mentioned contacts with MPs or candidate MPs. What is your attitude to these people who are democratically candidates, but who carry values of rejection, racism; things

that are obviously wrong in our societies, it seems to me?

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - Perhaps I would like to add in the same vein as my colleague, Mr Courard, to you, Madam. How do you analyse this curious and completely contradictory behaviour of our fellow citizens who, on the one hand, criticise, vilify politicians for their decisions, their slowness or their lack of attentiveness, but who, when invited to vote, do not go? How do you evaluate the fact that some rush onto platforms like yours, but that, at the same time, in our country, in a last survey, 36% of Belgians, more than one in three, say that would they be happy if they were exempted from voting and would not vote? I remind the room that voting is mandatory in Belgium. How do you reconcile these elements?

I turn to our Greek and Swedish expert to ask him. You took Botswana as an example. Of course, Botswana was a good example, since we call this country the Switzerland of Africa and it is a little atypical, it must be admitted, it is almost an African miracle, especially because it is a country with very little corruption. How could they develop this network of participation, knowing that it is a relatively large country, with very low population, with a very low density - nearly three inhabitants per square kilometre? Do you think that this transparency - which we welcome - may have been able to promote a much more stable rule of law, which is a reference in Africa? I remind you, Belgians, that Botswana, in the ranking of the economic index, is largely placed before us as a democratic country. We are still lagging behind them.

Those are the two things I wanted to comment on.

Are there other questions?

We will start with the two French and Walloon Belgian questions. I imagine our friends will take over.

Ms Boudehen has the floor.

Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement & Citoyens (France). - I will come back to the first question, namely that they are always the same ones who participate. We call them the ATS, always the same. This is often the case in citizen panels, in neighbourhood councils. These are the ones who have the time, who are available all day, especially at 6 pm while the others are still at work. They are often pensioners. They are always the same people. I do not think that we necessarily solve this

problem with digital. However, we will reach other audiences. This is why we try to have relatively complementary approaches because that is the way of reaching out to the young people who are more easily available on the digital. In addition, you can participate at any time of day. That is one way of moving away from the idea that we have a working life and therefore don't have the time. On the contrary, you can participate on Sunday evening at 11pm, if you feel like it. There is no physical meeting that is mandatory. We are breaking down one of the barriers.

As for the difficulty of speaking in public, it is often those who speak loudly, who shout loudly, who denounce, who participate more easily. These are often the activists. There, the fact that there is time to prepare the answer, is not an answer of the type: «I went to a meeting for two hours and I did not dare to speak. Lots of people have spoken, I'm going to shut up.» There, the fact that it is online makes it possible to prepare one's answer in writing, to structure it well. This is a second barrier to participation that is removed.

After, we have other brakes that are: «I have difficulty accessing digital». It can be by the connection, even if it improving little by little. The second brake that we have is also: «I do not know how to use digital tools.»

We have other difficulties, but we are solving some problems. It is useful to have it in addition to the existing panels.

As regards the representativeness of these people, our goal is not necessarily representativeness, because, as I said, it is more the elected representatives who have the objective to represent. We will try to touch a diversity of opinions and ideas. What is interesting is that it is often organised communities that participate first, because they are used to it, they already have their arguments ready. If we leave the consultation long enough - we suggest about five to six weeks of consultation - people have time to learn, as was the case for the citizen panel. They have time to train on the subject. There, participations taken on greater quality for citizens who did not necessarily know the subject. These are the double ins and outs.

Second, leaving five weeks also allows organisations, such as trade unions, which need to have bureau meetings to make an official decision, to meet. If we only leave three weeks, it is difficult for these structured organisations to provide a formal response on behalf of their organisation. We are trying to make up for these difficulties. I think that, whatever happens, complementarities between

citizen panels and digital would be optimal.

The question of the National Front, I find it interesting. In fact, we are asked very often, because people say to themselves: «Be careful, they are almost undemocratic.» At the time we did it, when Marion Marechal-Le Pen, who is the niece of Marine Le Pen, entered «Parlement & Citoyens», there were two National Front Members of Parliament. She asked us why they were only two and told us to do without, that it was easier. We were sure we wanted to have them, because our goal is that every citizen who wants to participate can feel represented by someone, can feel legitimate to give their point of view; we do not want to have political orientation. Especially today, when the National Front wins 30% in the second round of the presidential election, for us, it is very important, on the contrary, to take them into account.

Today, we do not have a National Front MP, because those who had signed up for the National Front were not elected. There are several of them. They say: «We are close to the people, so, of course, we will participate.» They are not those who are lagging behind the most on citizen participation, I would say. This is an observation that we made. On the contrary, it was more the Communists who did not want to participate, because they say: «We want to overthrow the system, we do not want to compromise.» So, they said: «We will not involve the citizen, the goal is the fight». While we expected them to be most favourable to participation, we had quite astonishing findings.

Perhaps I will go quickly to the third question, Mr President, how to react when citizens abstain, whereas, when we ask their opinion, they do not participate? There are two things we realised: on the one hand, the credibility of the process. For example, when we made the law for a digital republic, there were 21,000 people. We conducted a survey at the end, asking all the participants if they would be ready to participate again and asking them if they usually abstained, if they voted in elections, their socio-professional category, and so on.

Five thousand people answered, so this is a pretty satisfying panel for us. Out of 20,000, about a quarter of the people who responded. In fact, 95% said they would be willing to participate again, and of those 10% did not vote, that is, 10% say: «I never vote, but here I am asked my opinion on a specific subject, so yes, I want to participate.»

I would say that, if they know that it will be used for something, that it is a concrete law that will be voted on, they will participate, unlike a vote among two candidates who, in any case, they do

not like. The question was very much raised in the presidential elections. In any case, they had the impression that it would not change anything, that the vote would not change anything. While there, they saw that their participation had an impact. This is the credibility of the process put in place.

The second thing is that many do not feel able to participate. We have the problem in the French inner cities, they are often people whose first language is not French. Therefore, they do not feel comfortable having discussions. To solve this problem, we go through locally established associations that will organise debates. We provide them with support to organise thematic debates, with clear methodologies, we teach them about what a Member of Parliament is, what is a law, what is the subject of the day, and so on. Gradually, we go out there ourselves, but relying on people who are already acting locally.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - I give the floor to Mr Koulolias.

Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of eGovlab, Centre of excellence for e-governance (Sweden).- You mentioned Botswana and, as you said, it is a very big country. When districts are represented in the capital, it is a real challenge. It takes ages, transport is not the best, even if it is better than many countries in the region. For example, if you are from a district in the North and you have to go to the capital, it can take you 10 to 15 hours by car. Often, in many districts, it sometimes takes 12 to 13 hours to get there.

For elected officials to be able to visit their constituencies and meet their constituents, it's sometimes very difficult. When they are elected, they move to the city, to the capital, and often lose the links with their electorate. Therefore, the project we worked on with them includes a bit of technology throughout this process.

The person in charge of the constituency and of the Member of Parliament is based in the constituency itself. He transfers information electronically from Parliament and notes the remarks and transmits this to the public so they can discuss it in the kgotla. They then go to the kgotla, they discuss and they speak with the experts.

It's not very big, so they know the people. If it's a healthcare bill, for example, that is being discussed, they'll go and get doctors, and they'll also include them in the discussions with the public. They bring together everyone, including civil society. At that time, they will listen to different points of view and, when the Member of Parliament returns to his

constituency, they can talk with him, after having had all the discussions beforehand.

Regarding the sustainability of the project, this is a pilot project which has lasted for about two years. It has taken place in four constituencies. The work continues because the public is very interested in acting on what affects and impacts them. When we started the process and we had this policy development, they were interested, they wanted to be part of this process.

From a traditional point of view, the people who live in this area discuss everything - and it's not just in Botswana, the borders were drawn much later, there's also part of South Africa, part of Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. And that was the really interesting part of the project. In fact, they grow up with the idea that they can simply express their point of view and they do.

This particular structure had become somewhat detached from the daily work in Parliament. Finally, technology has allowed everyone to be brought back into the process.

Now they want to implement it in every constituency. Last year, they voted for a significant budget to buy computers for every constituency and every constituency office.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - I give the floor to Ms Costa.

Ms Sandra Costa, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Azores. - I come from the Azores, Portugal. I would like to know a little more about «Parlement & Citoyens». Was your association, which is wonderful, an individual initiative or was it sponsored by the Government or Parliament? Where does your budget come from?

Second, how do the citizens who participates in your platform identify themselves? Is it through Facebook, via their identity card? How do you know that this is a real person, a real human being and not a false image?

Secondly, at the level of citizen participation, what about security?

In Sweden, Mr Koulolias, are there guidelines, rules for open data that allow you to decide how to use the open data in your platform? Are all prototypes always open source? Can other countries contact you, pay for engineering, for example, and use your open source project?

Ms Clara Boudehen, General Delegate of Parlement

& Citoyens (France) - I will answer the first question: who founded the association? We are citizens at the origin. We first founded a larger association called Démocratie Ouverte, Open Gov France, which is composed of citizens, researchers, local elected officials, but above all, they are citizens. Some are interested in research, etcetera. In fact, it was by talking together that we had ideas. We founded Parlement & Citoyens. The founder is Cyril Lage. Before he was lobbyist for French companies, at the Parliament. He was fed up with the fact that, as a lobbyist, he had much easier access to Parliament than a typical citizen. He decided to try to give a form, in the beginning, it had to be a citizen lobby, a form of lobbying tool to the Parliament so that an ordinary citizen could more easily access the current discussions. He realised that the idea of a citizen lobby was not necessarily relevant, because it was still a lobby. Elected representatives are not necessarily against us, in fact quite the opposite. So, that's when he went to see himself, becoming a parliamentary assistant to elected representatives, he realized in fact that it was rather the dialogue that was interesting, more so than the idea of a citizen lobby to push ideas only. The idea is collaboration. That's how he set up Parlement & Citoyens in 2013.

Then, on the financing side, it's only been two months that we officially exist in the statutes, that we have a bank account, which allows us to raise funds. We will try to raise funds with the Senate, the Assembly, the Caisse des Dépôts which is the French financier, but also at the European level. We also have a membership system like any association, which is 50 euros for parliamentarians who want to enrol and which is normally 200 euros for companies. They too may be interested in participating and lobbying openly with Parliament. They want to show their position, so they are interested in being members too. Today, I am not paid. We are really in the fundraising phase, I am unemployed, but we have a great unemployment system in France, so let's take advantage of it. It is very useful for creating businesses and projects.

The third question is about anonymity or identification of people. At first, this is a question we asked ourselves.. We said to ourselves: «Should we check who does what? «Who are these people involved? We realised that it was not the most important, because we do not have the objective of voting in a national election, for example. In fact, we have deliberately chooses to leave it up to the person to decide whether to give their name or not. If they give their name, it can be verified that it exists by an email address, that it is not a robot. However, having their name is not important. Most people put pseudonyms or their

first name, surname, etcetera. We had the case of a lady named Jeanne Varasco who, in fact, was harassed in her workplace and put a pseudonym, so Jeanne Varasco, that's not her real name, but she did participate. She is the one who participated the most in the law for a digital republic, she made 400 contributions, I believe. She gave 400 ideas and for all that, it was not her real name. In fact, her idea can be interesting, without anyone knowing who the person is. After, we recontacted her as Jeanne Varasco, we asked her if she wanted to participate. There, she can reveal her face if she wants to, she can come to the meeting, but the interest is to have a diversity of ideas and not necessarily that we can say: «You think that, you think that» because sometimes it's difficult. We do not want to point at citizens according to their political position. They are completely free to use a pseudonym or use their real name. It works quite well because, in particular, Front National voters sometimes put ideas that may seem shocking to the public, but for me they are also legitimate. If they want to use a pseudonym or not, it's really up to them. Instead, anonymity is advocated on the platform.

It's a choice on our part. It is questionable, there may be other solutions, but it allows us to avoid the whole side of identification of people, with ID cards, because this completely hinders participation. When we have to fill 15 boxes and give our ID card scanned, at the end, we say that we will not participate, while there, we simply need: surname, first name, email address. The last thing we ask is the status: are you a citizen, are you a Member of Parliament, a profit organisation, a non-profit organisation, a company or association? That works pretty well.

On moderation, it goes with anonymity. People who participate on the platform know that they are participating for the sake of the law, that they will be read by parliamentarians, by experts. In fact, we do very little moderating. We made 0.6% of moderation on the Digital Republic law. We simply removed insult messages and promotional offers. Otherwise, people self-regulate and say to themselves: «I find that what you write is inappropriate.» They say it to each other. This puts the discussion back on track, we we have done zero moderation. There is no need, they know that they are participating in the law, so on this platform anyway, they are serious. It's not like on Facebook where they allow themselves to insult in their own name. There, we have quite a few insult rates.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - Are there any more questions?

Mr Vasilis Koulolias, Director of the eGovlab, Centre of excellence for e-governance (Sweden).- To answer Sandra's question: in Sweden, data is open by default. It is mandatory, it is a regulation for any Government body. The data has to be open. Mail and so on is kept. Any person or any organisation can check what I've done. It's actually one of the foundations of our way of working. Now, the problem is the use of data in a digital world. Many agencies publish data, so you can find it. We have an international development agency which publishes everything in PDF format, so you can't really search all documents it publishes. If you are looking for a particular point, it isn't easy, but it is open.

They are changing everything at the moment. Many agencies are considering standardising data, so it is easier to use. This is also one of the possibilities. It's actually one of the services our lab gives us when we need data. We take a sample and build it with assistance from the Agency, in such a way that it can actually be used and standardised.

Regarding the result and prototypes, again these are open source, since they have been developed through a collaborative effort. They can also be used in other places. For example, for what we've done in Botswana, the sources are open. Many other applications have been developed in-house and are also completely open.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - I give the floor to Mrs Delgado.

Ms Blanca Martin Delgado, President of the Parliament of Extremadura. - Thank you, Mr President, good morning everyone. I would first like to greet each of the participants and to congratulate them, because these are truly fantastic experiences and interventions. Compared to the experience that has been presented to us, both for France and for others, the experience also of Mr Koulolias.

As far as we are concerned, in Extremadura we have an experience that we still have to fulfil, but in 2013, an Open Government Act was approved, so there was an approval of the collaboration of citizen participation at the level of Regional Government and at Parliament level, as such in Extremadura. At that time, it was envisaged that a study would be created in the months that followed, with experts in citizen participation.

the aim was to give shape to a council of citizens in Extremadura. Citizens can intervene, not only citizens who represent civil society, but citizens who want to participate directly. There is a rule of participation which is established so that they

can meet in the Assembly of Extremadura or intervene directly at the level of the Parliament itself. Citizens can react to various proposals from the Government that are subsequently submitted to the Assembly for approval.. In my opinion, this is a welcome initiative considering the starting point and the goal we set for ourselves.

We also have other experiences. For example, «the 360° Member of Parliament» at the Congress level. I think this is something that is also at the level of Andalusia, it is «the 110° deputy». As far as we are concerned, in Extremadura, as part of their electoral programme, some political parties were considering this possibility, even if this was not implemented by some of these parties.

On the subject of the various interventions, the concept of representative democracy has been highlighted, which I think is very important. I do not know whether to talk about classical representation or not, but this participatory democracy is very important. Direct democracy also, we have a Greek who is here with us. But it is sometimes very difficult to give concrete shape to this direct democracy.

I am from a country where, in 2011, there was this movement in the streets with the 15-M Movement, for example, which, as was the case in other European countries or in the world, wanted to forge ahead further with this idea of democracy. However, there was no real success in the end.

Representative democracy was important in the project that was achieved. The representative of the European Commission said that representative democracy is going through a crisis phase today. I think we need to see what the different forms of participation are. We must not forget this concept of representative democracy.

One point I wanted to make is that Mr Pelayo talked about the transparency of the members of the European Parliament and the Commission who publish data with property declarations, etcetera. In Extremadura, we also have a law that has been approved to that effect. We do not present the statement of Members' property, but we present the IRPF, as it is called. It's an annual income statement. I have some doubts about that, and I wanted to know what the opinion of the participants was here.

We also publish the statements of our husband or wife. There is this border between the public and the private, which is a little blurry. This was the subject of a lot of debate, but no political force dared to say «no» because it gave the feeling, at that time, that there was something to hide.

At the same time, there may be some limits to the issue of transparency. We may want to be transparent, but perhaps we should not exaggerate because there is also the private sphere and our private life. It is not because we are public servants that the entire private sphere can be invaded. I wanted to know what you think about this question.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia - Are there any other speakers?

I give the floor to Mr Cecchetti.

Mr Fabrizio Cecchetti, Vice-President of the Regional Council of Lombardy. - Mr President, I bring you the greetings of Mr Cattaneo, President of Lombardy.

In relation to best practices, I would like to agree with my colleagues from other parliaments.

I would like to thank you for organising this working group for this morning. We heard some very interesting presentations. There will probably be other contacts that will be maintained beyond our meeting.

Regarding the representative of Parlement & Citoyens who marked her availability, this is an experience that could be replicated in other countries. In Lombardy, we would be very interested because there are obviously not 10 million inhabitants like in Sweden - it's a Region - but it's almost a state.

As regards initiatives in Lombardy, the Regional Council of Lombardy, the Regional Parliament of Lombardy, has four initiatives. I will introduce them very quickly.

First, the project «Open laws Lombardy» aims to make transparent the concrete effects of the various laws on the lives of citizens. The citizen, the company, the local administrator, the professor or the student can have access with this project «Open laws Lombardy», through an interface, to the institutions of the regional authorities, to documents, publications which today are only partially accessible to some people because they are on separate databases. There will be the opportunity to access all this information much more freely, to access the way the laws were developed, etcetera. This is a qualitative leap that is achieved through this.

There is also a whole question of institutional political culture. The Council of Lombardy has been involved for a long time on this subject.

It also wants to enhance the control function over

the implementation of regional policy evaluation laws. This is a project in Lombardy that was not envisaged until a year ago. In recent months, we have approved a law on the register of lobbies. Italy does not yet have a national law at this level, but some Regions have adopted laws and regulations in this area. I'm thinking of Tuscany, Molise or Abruzzo.

The five important points of this law on the register of lobbies provide:

- compulsory registration for interest groups wishing to carry out representation activities with public institutions, they must be registered on a list that is published on the institution's website;

- the very broad notion of public decision-maker;

- the transparency obligations also for public decision-makers in their interaction with representatives of the interest group;

- the involvement of interest group representatives in the law-making phase;

- traceability of information exchanges between public decision-makers and representatives of interest groups.

The law we have approved strives for greater transparency and traceability of the decisions that are taken by the institutions of Lombardy.

The third initiative we have undertaken in recent years is the Open Innovation platform, which is a virtual place for the exchange of information and the development of collaborations between people engaged in research and innovation in different sectors. To date, there are 6,500 registered users of this platform: managers, entrepreneurs, academics, reference persons from research centres, and professionals. There is a whole process of innovation and exchange and this allows participants to meet, exchange information, form groups, plan projects together and exploit the results.

Almost one year after launching this law, there are already 94 thematic communities, 31 proposals for collaboration and 946 active discussions. The platform has a very broad development potential. It is aimed at specialists, but we can inform, consult and involve all citizens and not only specialists.

The last initiative is a proposal that I presented directly. This is still a law that is currently being debated in the Committee on Institutional Affairs of the Parliament of Lombardy. It is a proposal for a law whose most important objective is the establishment of a single regional portal for citizen

participation. This law should make it possible to give technical assistance to citizens who want to propose laws by popular initiative. So, in fact, we are giving all citizens the opportunity to present and submit bills.

However, we put technicians at their disposal to prepare, obviously, this proposal. Otherwise, as has been pointed out, there are citizens who are not in a position to make legislative proposals, which are not applicable to various issues.

This is the first element of this bill. And it's still a project. It's about having an online portal for participation through a certifying authentication. We thought about the health card, for example. We have a health card system where each citizen has a code and they already have different roles at the bureaucratic level. With this code, we can authenticate the person, verify them, control them and the citizen can intervene within this portal. They have the opportunity to present, submit proposals for amendments to draft laws, for example, which were presented by the Regional Parliament of Lombardy.

There is also the possibility of collecting signatures on bills by popular initiative that are filed on the portal, or to collect signatures for a consultation, for a referendum, and then also submit petitions.

The main problem is that the citizen is led to participation through parties, for petitions, bills, and otherwise he is detached, he does not know how to get involved. Through this tool, it allows a more direct application and so it is something very positive. We are discussing this at the Regional Parliament level and within a few months we will come to a result.

These are four initiatives that came to mind.

This portal will allow for certified surveys, again. We talked about 1,100 citizens who were chosen to do the sample as part of the involvement of citizens in the Walloon Parliament. With this certified survey system, it would be possible to know what the Lombard people think about different laws, or about different proposals. Know what the population of Wallonia thinks about euthanasia, for example. In a very short time, we could have a survey that would not be done by an external institution, but we would have directly information, with the system of the code of the health card of the citizens, to have the participation of the citizens in the polls.. We would not have only 1,100 people, but it could be millions of people who participate in polls and who could be interviewed.

We are very close to the possibility of putting all this into practice concretely.

I will conclude by referring to what the President of the Parliament of Extremadura said, we publish everything about our system.

Another problem for us is that privacy, we no longer know what it is. Everything is published. Everything is accessible. About the elected representatives. Obviously, we ask for the consensus of the spouse, but everything is published, everything is transparent.

Each year, the local press, but not only, has the possibility of checking the number of houses, cars, what are the mandates that elected representatives have, and so on. This allows you to do all these checks. We may be doing too much, it's possible..

Thank you.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - Are there any reactions to these testimonies or other questions?

I pass the floor to Mr Pelayo.

Mr Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA). - Regarding the issue of transparency addressed by Madam, we are a little bit outside the question of democracy as I had presented it, but today, transparency, anyway, in a way or another, is a condition, is a prerequisite for all processes of democratic institutions.

At the level of the European Union, we have different models. I did not know, personally, that in Extremadura you had such a detailed, such as precise system of transparency. There are other systems that are highly developed, as in Romania, a transparency that concerns elected politicians, but also officials. It is really with a very high level of detail, it concerns the statements that politicians and public servants must make when they take office, to complete their duties. These are not only declarations on land, but also declarations relating to income.

Every country, every region, has its model. It also depends a little bit on the actual situation or the situation as perceived with respect to integrity and corruption. It is very often also a reaction to certain events.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that we see that there are a lot of innovations in the

field of democracy, which are extremely interesting in the whole of Europe, so I would like to take advantage of this platform to encourage perhaps doing some things in the framework of the CALRE or in a more informal setting and talking to the regions and maybe also using our programme, «Europe for citizens» to try to put together some programmes that would deepen this kind of theme since in our work we have networks of cities. But we can also have networks of regions or networks of provinces or other types of entities and we can thus support European projects that address this issue of democratic innovation to exchange experiences if this can be interesting.

It's still a somewhat competitive process. So I cannot give any guarantee as to the possibility of ultimately giving support, but at the same time we really want to have projects of this kind on democratic innovation for the whole of the European Union and therefore I think that could be an interesting initiative.

Thank you very much.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - I turn one last time to the assembly. I'm keeping one eye on you and another on the time as we had agreed that we would finish around 13 hours to allow us, when the time comes, to go to the plenary room and take the official photo of the delegations with the experts present.

There are no more interventions.

Mr André Antoine, President of the Parliament of Wallonia. - I would like to address you, under the benevolent eye of our President of the CALRE, to tell you that we are therefore coming to the end of the work of this working group which met for the second time, following on from the work of my predecessor then chair of this working group and ask you a little about what happens next.

I think we had an approach in the first working group that was more academic, more scientific, more political philosophy.

Here, we focused more on the tools, either of European support, or of shared governance, or platform to co-construct a law or a citizen panel. So we tried to be extremely pedagogical, and a big thank you to those from different parliaments who told us what they were doing at home, it was a second part.

For the rest of our work, since this working group must still continue its work before being able to report it to the general assembly of the CALRE,

I would like to hear from you if you have any suggestion. Our Parliament, its Secretary General and your servant are obviously at your disposal to prepare the next working group.

If there are any suggestions, they are obviously welcome. If there are no more suggestions, then may I take this opportunity, with the agreement of the CALRE President, to propose perhaps one or more theme or meeting for the next working group to ensure that we continue to keep our fingers on the pulse of the concerns that are today shared concerns. I did not hear one of you say to me: «No, we have no problem with our fellow citizens. They are very happy. They trust us. What they ask is that the elected representatives decide. » We see that we are no longer in this exclusive representative democracy, but more in a continuous democracy, participative or narrative democracy, you see I have remembered the name.

I draw the following conclusion: very simply, probably, for older Members of Parliament, like me, we became representatives in the first place to work for the citizens. I draw this conclusion in recent years and after this morning again, that today we must work with the citizens, which is a difficult evolution, because the contributions are multiple, sometimes random, and because we no longer have the spontaneous confidence of the citizens to be able to coconstruct. Earlier, I touched on the question of a possible clean break with tradition.

It is this work with and not for the citizens, even if one does not prevent the other of course, which awaits us in the future.

I would like to thank the experts and our elected citizen who is practically an expert in his own right. I think he would be happy to go to other parliaments to present - I see it - the initiative that we have mentioned with great pleasure.

All that remains for me to do is to thank you.

You will have noticed that, to facilitate the work, we gave you a small gift to mark the occasion, typically Belgian and Walloon, chocolate.

Chocolate generally has two uses. The first does not quite fit the usual parliamentary practice, chocolate - it is said - compensates for a lack of sexual activity. This is a first version. The other one, which strikes me as more relevant, is to boost optimism and enthusiasm. You will not mind my choosing the second version, that of boosting enthusiasm and optimism for our work and participating in the creation of trust that is necessary between elected

officials and citizens.

For the experts, no chocolate, not that we have doubts about your activities or your optimism, but I think that we have planned and will hand to you the official gifts, perhaps we will let Mr Secretary General do the honours, because it was you who brought us our expert from your trip to the United States. That's it, Mr De Decker, will hand you your gifts.

Here, we are moving from chocolate to typical Walloon crafts, Val Saint-Lambert. You will see that we can also produce some very beautiful objects.

I can only thank you again. To return to Botswana, you know that Botswana's motto is «May rain fall». I am going to borrow their maxim to say "May ideas fall", may suggestions fall so that we can restore the relationship trust that we, elected representatives, wish to elicit from our fellow citizens.

Thank you and I kindly invite you to follow us into the plenary room.

- The session was adjourned at 13 hundred hours and 4 minutes.

**SPEECH BY MR ANDRÉ ANTOINE ON THE OCCASION OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF CALRE
9 AND 10 NOVEMBER 2017**

The President of CALRE,
The President of the Assembly of European Regions,
The President of the Government of Andalusia,
The Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,
Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to speak before you again, to report on our group's work on interactive democracy, a subject that is particularly close to my heart.

Last year, I had the opportunity to summarise the talks of three university experts who came to explain the philosophical dimensions of participation. I remember in particular that the taste for democracy is above all maintained by being practised daily.

Therefore, it is up to parliaments to make this practice possible, through both technological innovations and original initiatives, within our assemblies and at a local level. Wishing to provide CALRE members with concrete tools to do this, the meeting of the working group of 30 June 2017 was an opportunity to hear four practitioners from all over Europe.

As such, we have been informed of the many efforts made by the European Union in terms of participation, such as the 'Better Regulation' initiative, the European Ombudsman, and also the Europe for Citizens programme.

This mechanism, of which Mr Gilles Pelayo is the director, brings together people from different regions around themes of common interest, thus promoting the development of genuine European citizenship.

I am convinced that such approaches can promote mutual understanding among Europeans on issues where their interests seem to diverge, such as migration, tax competition, or the posting of workers. I therefore strongly encourage CALRE members to submit projects in this context, as is already the case in many cities in Andalusia.

Then, Mr. Vasilis Koulolias, Director of eGovLab in Sweden, stressed the importance of involving citizens from the beginning of the creation of new tools, to identify their real needs and formulate appropriate responses to them. Moreover, he has been very insistent on the idea that technology helps participation, but that it must first and foremost be part of our democratic culture.

As such, collaboration between users, the Swedish Government and a telephone operator allowed easy access to state services for new arrivals. This example reminds us that the lack of citizen participation is all too often manifested by the non-use of public services and social rights. Yet, these constitute an indispensable condition for real inclusion of all in society and therefore within democracy.

The French «Parliament & Citizens» platform, which was presented to us by Clara Boudehen, is another interesting example of synergy between technology and democracy. As a real digital National Assembly, this tool for co-constructing the law by citizens and deputies has met great success since its creation in 2013 by a citizens' collective. It has allowed the passage

of a law to ban pesticides in public spaces, and also the adaptation of a government bill on digital, technology, to name only the best-known examples.

In the Parliament of Wallonia, we fully subscribe to this approach, since we will soon transpose it into our own assembly. Given our French neighbours' success and the interest it has aroused in the assembly, I am convinced that this platform is a promising answer to a problem already identified

by my predecessor: namely the difficulty our fellow citizens have to seize the opportunities that we place at their disposal.

I express the wish that by offering citizens a modern tool, built by them and for them, we can finally take this decisive step towards a truly «continuous» democracy.

Finally, the fourth speaker was not entirely unknown to me, since this was Mr. Stéphane Quain, a participant in the Citizen Panel on the challenges of ageing organised by the Parliament of Wallonia between April and May 2017.

Over four days, 30 representative citizens of our Region took the place of the members of the Walloon parliament, in order to build solutions for the demographic challenge that awaits us. In this task they were assisted by a Scientific Committee to support and inform them on such a complex and important subject. In addition, we commissioned a survey of a thousand Walloons, as well as a qualitative audiovisual survey.

I must point out that this approach has gained wide acceptance in Wallonia, both from the participants themselves and from the media and politicians. For it to be meaningful, it was important that this experience should directly involve the representatives of the executive and legislative branches.

This is why the «consensus statement» adopted at the end of the process was the subject of a reasoned response, both by the different political parties and by the competent ministers. Moreover, we have already planned to meet the panellists within a few months, in order to jointly follow up on their recommendations and, if necessary, take corrective measures.

In any case, the first assessment we can draw from this experience is definitely positive. It demonstrates that, by using suitable methods and means, it is possible to directly involve citizens in a positive and constructive approach, even on a complex subject. That is why I am already committed to redoubling my efforts to put this innovation in the tradition of our Parliament and thus establish it as a true «fabric of democracy».

Dear Colleagues,

After two years at the head of this group, I wish to reaffirm my desire to continue our work around «interactive democracy». Far from being closed, this theme retains all its relevance and still has many potentialities.

If you were to renew this thematic working group and entrust me with the coordination for a third consecutive year, I pledge to organise new exchanges within the Parliament of Wallonia, especially around participation at the local level. Indeed, my years of experience in local government have forged my conviction that it is at this level that public action has most meaning for our fellow citizens and that it is most accessible to them.

Before concluding, I would like to share with you the thoughts of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who rightly wrote that «Democracy must be a fraternity - otherwise, it's a sham. «I speak under the eye of my colleagues, stating that this quote is a good illustration of the spirit of our work over the past two years and which, I hope, will continue to inspire us in the future.

Thank you.