



III CALRE AWARD

“Stars of Europe”

Participation form

Regional Legislative Assembly: Parlement de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles / Communauté française (Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation / French-speaking Community)

Country: Belgium

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Type of project:

- a) Regional law:
 - b) Administrative act:
 - c) Procedure:
- Other: Citizen Participation Project.



Date of issuing of the initiative:

Reference period:

Key dates for the "Citizen Parliament":

- **May 9, 2017:**

Launch of the call for applications (on the occasion of Europe Day).

- **Saturday 1 July 2017:**

First meeting with the participating citizens. This meeting was meant to present the methodology of the project and to put in perspective the main guidelines of the discussion (themes addressed, working methods,...).

The participants also had the opportunity to discuss with experts on the European question, in order to deepen and compare their knowledge on Europe, on the basis of the scenarios on the future of the Union developed in the European Commission's White Paper published in March 2017.

- **Saturday 23 September 2017:**

A whole day devoted to the work of the Citizen Parliament: debates in committee and in plenary session.

Implementation of a methodology known as "collective intelligence" in order to encourage the participation of all.

Presence of citizen participation professionals and academic experts on European issues.

A citizen resolution was drafted and voted by the participants at the end of the day (see annex).

- **October 16, 2017:**

Hearing of citizens' representatives in the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

- **November 8, 2017:**

Presentation of the Citizen Parliaments achievement by several representatives of the participants during the Parliament's plenary session.



Short description of the initiative:

The Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has developed the Citizen Parliament initiative, a major citizen participation project on the theme "What Europe for tomorrow? ».

Implemented on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and in response to the call by the President of the European Commission to stimulate a broad public debate, this project aimed to enable citizens to give their opinion on the future of Europe.

For this purpose, we set up a panel of 94 French-speaking citizens (to echo the 94 members of our assembly). A call for participation was launched from 9 May to 9 June 2017. Almost 1,000 people applied to participate.

The 94 participants were drawn by lot, using a methodology that made it possible to set up a panel that would represent as well as possible the population of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

This project is a real innovation in policy debate. Based on the methodology of the consensus conference, the aim of this initiative was to bring out a common message, carried by all participants.

The latter was sent to the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, the European Union and the general public.

In order to carry out this project, our institution worked in partnership with the Université libre de Bruxelles, as far as the scientific component was concerned.

We also paid particular attention to communication, in order to make the initiative known to as many people as possible.

A special issue (see annex) was published at the end of the second day in the daily newspapers "*La Libre Belgique*" and "*La Dernière Heure*".



Role of the regional Assembly:

The project was initiated by the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels/French Community Federation, the main project manager.

The Parliament has carried this project from conception to completion. Parliamentary administration officials have been mobilised to design, implement and monitor this initiative.

Throughout the project, parliamentary staff were at the side of the participants to accompany them.

Members of Parliament (MP's) were also involved.

One representative from each recognised political group in our assembly was a member of the project steering committee. Members were also invited to attend the work of the Citizen Parliament.

Above all, the work carried out by the participants and the text of the adopted citizens' resolution were presented to MPs (notification of text of the resolution to MPs, hearing in committee and presentation in plenary session of the representatives of the citizens' panel).

Moreover, as the project took place within the Parliament's premises, the participants were at the heart of our institution and were thus able to better understand how a parliamentary assembly works.

Main features of the initiative:

The main characteristics of this project are:

- **Citizen participation:**

The aim was to address the European question in a process of participatory democracy.

The underlying logic was to bring Europe, but also the parliamentary institution, closer to the citizens. Within the framework of the "Citizen Parliament" project, the focus was indeed on the participants who were invited to give their vision of tomorrow's Europe, thanks to the consensus conference methodology.

The project went further than a simple informed survey and allowed the construction of a common message, carried by all participants.



Moving debate, small group work in the form of "world café", were all techniques that had been put in place to promote citizen expression.

This unprecedented experience shows the will of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to open itself up to the outside world and to strengthen exchanges with citizens.

- **The European dimension of the theme:**

This project was part of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. On this occasion, the European Commission presented a White Paper on the future of Europe and wanted to stimulate a broad public debate on the issue.

The Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation wished to be part of the process and to propose the contribution of a citizen Parliament, made up of French-speaking citizens from Wallonia and Brussels.

Moreover, as a member of CALRE, it was important for the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to launch a participatory debate on the issue.

- **A logic of citizen education:**

This project also meets a continuing education objective.

First of all, the European question. Indeed, through this project, citizens have been encouraged to think about the future of Europe, to confront their points of view, but also to learn more about the European Union.

They had the opportunity to exchange with experts and a series of information was also made available to them to prepare their work.

All this allowed the participants to better understand Europe, its institutions and their functioning, as well as the different possible scenarios for the evolution of Europe in the years to come.

In addition, participants were familiarized with the reality of parliamentary work. They had to exchange and debate together in order to draft a common text, on which they voted, just like real Members of Parliament. This process gave them a better understanding of what parliamentary work is and the democratic process.

This Citizen Parliament project is a tremendous opportunity to build bridges, to promote dialogue between the parliamentary institution and citizens.



Description of the consequences on the regions pointing out the positive European implications:

Through this project, we hope to provide a better understanding of the European Union, but also to reduce the growing distance between Europe and its citizens.

The aim was also to highlight the point of view of a panel of French-speaking citizens from Wallonia and Brussels, in a dynamic of participatory democracy.

It was also important for our Parliament to follow-up on this work and to relay the initiative.

The Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation had committed itself to this and has done so, both with the European institutions and the general public, via the media, social networks and our website in particular.

In addition, we will keep participants informed of any follow-up given to their citizen resolution.

Forms with the description of the initiative must be sent by 30 May 2018 to the CALRE General Secretariat, at the following e-mail:

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