

DIRECT DEMOCRATIC EURO-VISION

NEWSLETTER

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WORLDWIDE DIRECT DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER DIRECT/RACY

TRANSITIONS

Since the beginning, human history has proceeded along two not always coinciding lines: Development of societies and development of the respective political systems. When established, the political system tends to become stable and rigid because the leading oligarchy, their administrative apparatus and certain privileged minorities in the population benefit from it as it is and oppose change. However, society develops and at a certain point, the institutions of the political system become less and less compatible with the actual degree of social development. Sooner or later, the discrepancy becomes too great, impossible to conceal or repair, and a radical change, a transition to a new system, becomes unavoidable. In modern times, the most notorious transition of this type occured in the late eighteenth century in North America and France. It was a transition from the rule by hereditary aristocracy to the rule by political parties, labelled as "democracy".

Since the nineteen nineties, a similar process is observable in the Western world. Societies are still ruled by political parties, while social development makes this type of rule increasingly dysfunctional, obsolete, and, in the long run, untenable. Why? Firstly, political parties were established to promote interests of certain categories of citizens inside countries. At present, however, it is common interests of all - global economic stability, avoiding global threats to survival, global peace and security – that become dominant. Party politics is unable to adequately adress these issues. Secondly, the development of information and communication technology makes political parties redundant. Everybody can either participate directly in political processes or elect representatives on the basis of election districts instead of parties, and remain in touch with his/her representatives even between elections, including the possibility of recall.

As always, the ruling oligarchies try to oppose this development pretending that no other form of "democracy" but the existing form of representation by parties is possible in practice. Reluctantly, they sometimes concede the inclusion of referenda or deliberation (planning cells, citizen juries) in the system, to ease the pressure, but this is not really the transition needed. Such transition can only be based on a Citizens' Constitution, as the supreme form of Direct Democracy, or better, Direct Deliberative **Democracy**. This should be our main target, not only I&R or deliberation alone.

GERMANY SHOWS THE WAY IN EUROPE



In DD circles round the world, especially in Europe, Germany is famous as the country hosting the strongest DD organisation globally (Mehr Demokratie e.V.) as well as the country where a classical model of citizen deliberation (Prof.Dienel's Planning Cells) has been conceived and developed. Until now, however, to my knowledge, the idea of Citizens' Constitution, has not emerged there, or elsewhere in Europe, except in Czech Republic, although in several countries referenda were held about constitutions proposed by politicians. In the USA, the National Initiative for Democracy, founded by Senator Mike Gravel, promotes the principle of direct citizen participation in the sphere of lawmaking even on the federal level. In Czech Republic, as early as 2005, a draft of a Citizens' Constitution was put forward, not only on the web, but even published in print. At last, this fundamental idea is emerging in Germany as well. In March 2012, the first meeting of the Verfassungskonvent (INITIATIVE-verfassungskonvent.de) was organised in Bad Honnef. Here is the resolution (translated from German:

"From indignation to state responsibility Citizen uprising for a German Constitution We, citizens, experience our country, the Federal Republic of Germany, as based on a peculiar Constitution:

- Instead of 'the promotion of the wellbeing of the people' according to the oath of office, the parties and governments exhaust their energy in trying 'to calm the markets';
- Social and cultural achievements of our people are being sacrificed to global economic speculation, social care facilities and infrastructures are being sold, more and more people are being pushed into precarious life conditions;
- Together with the mechanism at the disposal for decisions about European Stability (ESM), not only astronomic sums of money are being poured into the banks, but at the same time, democratic rights and structures are being cancelled.

We are furious because we love our country and do not want to offer it to the plunder of speculators and casino banks.

However, "Rage and dissatisfaction are not enough; there have to be concrete consequences". (Bertolt Breccht)

In our nation, we want to promote and consolidate social and ethic values — solidarity and common good, to anchor them again as policy and State objectives, obligatory for the citizens. It is time to dissolve the provisional "Basic Law" (Grundgesetz) which has been in force since 1949 and replace it by a Constitution adopted by free decision-making of the people. This is what the Article 148 of the Basic Law prompts us to do. However, only if developed in a broad process of dialogue, accessible to every citizen, such a Constitution can be maintained and filled with life by the people.

We call our fellow citizens to such a broad dialogue:

- Speak with your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues about the idea of a society based on solidarity and pursuing common good.
- Form discussion circles in order to put forward proposals for the development of general framework for such a society.
- Participate in the Constitutional Convention conceived as citizens dialogue (<u>www.visionspolitics.de</u>).
- If you are already politically, socially or culturally involved with the view of contributing to the common good, please try to discuss with your colleagues the framework which impedes your effort and the desirable adjustments.
- Please, contribute by your views and ideas to the Constitutional Convention (<u>www.initiative-verfassungskonvent.</u> de).

As citizens of this Federal Republic, by means of the "Initiative Constitutional Convention", we want to start a citizen movement. Our objective is to put in place a Constitution guaranteeing solidarity, justice and common good.

Article 146 (Basic Law)

"This Basic Law, in force after the completion of the unity and liberty of Germany for the whole German people, loses its validity as soon as a Constitution is adopted by the German nation in the course of a free decision-making process."

This is the path all European nations should set out on. Mere I&R and Deliberation is not enough.(JP)

INTERNATIONAL

USA

The Citizens Initiative Package An Introduction

Over the past 20 years I have developed and written about the National Initiative for Democracy, federal (national) metalegislation that includes an amendment to the Constitution and a National Statute that can be enacted into law by the citizens of any country. The name, the web and a URL are in the process of being changed to "Citizens Initiative" which is more descriptive of the undertaking. We hope to have all the changes in place by the end of January 2012 permitting us to develop a strategy to secure the necessary votes via the Internet and a publicly visible voter solicitation program.

This package includes two chapters from my book Citizen Power. Chapter 2 presents the concept and the reasoning behind the Citizens Initiative empowering citizens to be able to vote on all the issues that affect their lives in every government jurisdiction of their country. This meta-legislation (fundamental legislation) permits citizens to address the dysfunctionality of representative government. There are only two venues for change: the government, wherein lies the problem, or the people. Unfortunately, the people lack the legislative procedures that would permit them to enact laws to address the issues that affect their lives.

Chapter 12 is new scholarship that shows the role of slavery at the heart of the flawed structural design of the American Constitution creating a representative government, which has been copied so extensively around the world. The Constitutional Framers failed to keep faith with the moral vision of the Declaration of Independence, which in essence declared all human beings to be equal. The Constitution is haunted by its undemocratic features that continue to limit the possibility of Americans having a government "by the People".

This package also includes the text of the Citizens Amendment and the Citizens Legislative Procedures Act, plus Notable Quotes of our Founding Fathers articulating their views that all future generations of Americans should be able to amend their constitutions and make laws to address their needs. Since the Constitutional Framers failed to provide the needed legislative procedures in 1787 permitting the people to change their government without recourse to violence, it is now incumbent upon the Democracy Foundation to educate the American public about their legislative powers and how to bring about their enactment. The Citizens Initiative, meta-legislation, is presented to the people in a national election conducted by the nonprofit corporation Philadelphia II. This legislative undertaking permits American voters to complete the unfinished work of the Framers of the American Constitution. With the enactment of the Citizens Initiative, we seek to bring about a paradigm change in human governance.

Mike Gravel, November 18, 2011

Excerpts from Prof.**Ted Becker**'s blog (http://last-lost-empire.com/blog/:

January 2nd, 2012, by Ted Becker: "Think the 2012 elections in the USA will be all about Obama and Republicans? Think again. You're in for some BIG surprises."

June 28th, 2012 by Ted Becker:

"Protests, Demonstrations and Occupations Do Not Change the American Political System

Alright already!! I think I've heards just about every "Occupy" idea there is: Occupy Wall Street, Occupy the Banks, Occupy Congress, Occupy Foreclosed Homes, Occupy College Campuses, Occupy Factories, Occupy Your Conscience — yes — even Occupy Mordor. From Barcelona to Bahrain to Berkeley: Occupy was the key word for a while.

But no, "The American Occupy Movement" is not dead. If you want to read an excellent analysis of that, here 's Chris Hedge 's article: "Occupy Will Be Back!"

(excerpt) "In every conflict, insurgency, uprising and revolution I have covered as a foreign correspondent, the power elite used periods of dormancy, lulls and setbacks to write off the opposition. This is why obituaries for the Occupy movement are in vogue. And this is why the next groundswell of popular protest – and

there will be one – will be labelled as "unexpected", a "shock" and a "surprise". The television pundits and talking heads, the columnists and academics who declare the movement dead are as out of touch with reality now as they were on Sept.17 when New York City´s Zuccotti Park was occupied."

July 2nd, 2012, by Ted Becker: <u>The First Two American</u> <u>Democracy Amendment Movements</u>

"The ONLY way to transform the current overwhelming dissatisfaction with American politics and American political economic institutions into a much more democratic system of governence at the national level is to pass a SERIES of Constitutional Amendments to accomplish that goal.

A series of amendments? Is that even possible?

Ahem. Please. It's been done several times in American history. When did this happen? How about right at the birth of this nation?"

20 July, Mr.**Pablo Segundo Garcia** wrote: "Two free university courses. Besides learning we can do networking. They issue a certificate of completion.

Https://www.coursera.org/course/digitaldemocracy

University of Michigan 3 September 2012 J.Alex Halderman

https://www.coursera.org/course/crypto

Stanford University 27 August 2012 Dan Boneh, Professor

I think they are very interesting for our cause. Please recommunicate (FB, local groups, ...).

And do report back if you take it! I subscribed."

9 August: A letter from Mr.lan Woods concerning a very interesting ballot initiative in California:

"Dear friends and family,

Below is a message from the Organic Consumers Association asking for volunteers for get the word out about proposition 37. Prop 37, the California GMO labeling law, is touted to be one of the biggest fights between big money interest who want to control our food and consumers who want to know what they are eating and have choice. According to Jeffrey Smith, one of the leading experts on GMOs, Monsanto´s goals are to control all the commercial seed in the world in 20 years!

(See http://www.naturalnews.com/032826_Monsanto_seed_supply.html.) We have a chance to turn their plans around in California by voting YES on Prop 37. This is why I am volunteering to work on this issue now as I truly see it as one of the biggest political action items to date. Thom Hartman calls this: "a NOW or NEVER proposition." See:

Prop 37 CA Right to Know Label GMOs – if passed this Nov it will be the BIGGEST GAME CHANGER for the 99% EVER!!

http://www.thomhartman.com/users/iam4028/blog/2012/08/prop-37-ca-right-know-label-gmos-if-passed-nov-it-will-be-biggest-game-ch?page=1

Please help out and spread the word and or volunteer: You can sign up to help at www.carighttoknow.org, labelgmos org. or with the Organic Consumers Association.

Thanks so much! Hope you can help.

Camille Sauve"

UK

15 May: **I&Rgb** wrote, "Were you looking forward to getting together with some like-minded fellow-citizens to start up a local, district, town or city referendum? New rules for referendum were promised, to feature in the ruling coalition's much touted Localism Act.

Well, forget it! Many people will be angry to learn that a showpiece reform which was supposed to deliver "power to the people" has been drastically cut back."

21 June, the **WDDM Webmaster** wrote, "Consensus Decision Making Seeds for Change – for grassroots campaigners: http://seedsforchange.org.uk/free/consensus

22 June, **I&Rgb** wrote, "(I&Rgb) presents a chronological compendium of notes, and comments on press articles, which illustrate how we at Iniref-I&Rgb observed and tried to influence the fate of citizen's democracy in the Localism Bill...."

2 July: **I&Rgb** wrote: <u>Modern Direct Democracy for Scotland</u> - Questions and answers (excerpts)

"...expressing our political sovereignty, we the people could intervene on important issues which we choose to select"......

Question: Iniref says the Direct Democracy provisions would apply in the period between elections but I'm intrigued as to why under such a system as Direct Democracy it is even necessary to have elections or elected representatives. Surely the will of the people could be heard and enacted by professional civil servants and legislators and elections themselves become unnecessary? (even oversight could be done by judges or appointed commissioners)

Reply: We are not suggesting a sudden, drastic change and ask you all to consider the case of Scotland. We propose to integrate a few methods of direct democracy with our existing system of political parties and parliament. These can be introduced in a step-wise manner so that the people, the civil service and politicians can learn to deal with the innovations in hopefully constructive ways. This model is well known, tried and tested in a number of other countries. The use of direct democratic tools, such as the citizens' law-proposal or the veto-referendum, once they have been formally introduced, we envisage as being optional. So, if a government "forgets" some manifesto promise, or proposes some action which nobody wants, or there are unforseen events, then an "initiative" which could lead to binding referendum could be launched. An agreed, large number of voter-endorsements would be needed to kickstart this process. '

(For the whole text, please contact I&Rgb)

GERMANY

mdmagazin 2/2012 Titelthema: Europa braucht mehr Demokratie

Editorial by Neelke Wagner

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MD INTERN

SWITZERLAND

18 May: **I&Rgb** wrote, <u>The government (Bundesrat)</u> recommends – Vote NO, against direct election of government ministers: Election of ministers by Parliament has proved to be successful

(translation by I&Rgb)

"Bern, 16.05.2012 – Were government ministers to be elected directly by the people, there would be negative effects for the Swiss democratic system. Equilibrium between government and parliament would be weakened, as to the balance (Ed: federal balance, e.g. Region, party, gender) and the collegiality in the government (Bundesrat). Party politics would increase to the disadvantage of issue-politics. Especially for the latter reason the Bundesrat urges the electorate to reject the Citizens' Initiative (Ed: law proposal) "Direct Election of the Government" and offers no alternative proposal." Der Bundesrat

(Evidently, not even Switzerland is a perfect democracy!! JP)

GREECE

30 May: Circular letter

"Dear Sirs/Madams

Greek Patriotic Front (Patriotiko Metopo) is a Direct Democracy political party and movement in Greece, which was founded in 2009

Our main political position is based on the principles of the Ancient Athenian Democracy of Periklis and the modern Direct Democracy that today exists in Switzerland.

We are interested in getting in contact with all Direct Democracy political parties and movements in all around the world, so that we can start a closer cooperation, on every possible level.

Please inform us if your movement is interested in exchanging further detailed information about our political principles and activities.

Best regards Stavros Vitalis, Coordinator pametopo@mail.com

SWEDEN

While on the national level, serious discussions about Direct Democracy, let alone DD procedures are more or less non-existent, on the local level, by contrast, in some places, projects for strengthening citizen participation might become a fertile soil from which the idea of Sweden itself heading for a real, i.e. semi-direct democracy is likely to ultimately emerge. At present, thanks to the co-ordinator Dr.**Bruno Kaufmann**, one of the leading DD personalities globally, perhaps the most promising development is taking place in the Falun Commune.



Bruno Kaufmann

A few excerpts from the respective Democracy Plan:

"....effective people power matters more than ever, and recent constitutional revisions in Sweden and the European Union have strengthened citizens' initiative rights at a local, regional and transnational levels. Backing these developments, the Falun City Parliament decided in 2011 to launch the "Democracy City" process"....."On the way to becoming one of the leading "Democracy Cities" the Falun parliament in spring 2012 approved a roadmap called "Democracy Plan 2015" featuring five main areas and elected a "Democracy Council" to facilitate the implementation of it. These are the key areas of development up to 2015:

- 1) Democracy Centers
- 2) Democracy Navigators
- 3) Young Democracy
- 4) Falu Democracy Web
- 5) Democracy Networks

In 2013 Falun City will present a first set of infrastructural features to the citizens of the municipality and all interested people from across Sweden and the world. For more information and updates visit us at falun.se/democracy.

CZECH REPUBLIC

15 June, A celebration of Prof.**Milan Zelený** s 70th birth anniversary was held at the Vilémov Castle. It was a beautiful evening with music and dance, with the participation of several prominent persons, both from the Czech Republic and other countries. The work of Prof.Zelený is internationally known and appreciated. A booklet called "The Spring passed through our street....", written by Prof.Zelený and evoking, in a poetic and impressionistic language his early memories of the end of the Second World War and the communist coup of 1948, was distributed to the participants.

The main subject of informal discussions was the proposal that

Prof.Zelený should run for the presidency of Czech Republic in the coming election. No doubt, he would be an excellent president, incomparably better than the sitting one, Václav Klaus, a conceited and arrogant person, responsible for the so called "coupon privatization" of the nineties, a project enabling a few top figures of the new establishment to steal a large part of the national property. Prof.Zelený rightly criticised that project from the very beginning and aroused Klaus´ anger. Let´s hope sufficient support can be mobilised to persuade Prof.Zelený to run. (JP)



SIMPOL

9 July: Simpol International – News Update (excerpts) Simpol likely to be one of THE 'killer apps' of the coming years

So said **Ken Wilber**, founder of Integral Theory at the annual conference of the German Integral Forum (July 15-17). Previously, Wilber already described Simpol as "a 2nd-tier political practice that makes a great deal of sense and is certainly worth backing". In March 2012, Wilber joined Simpol's Advisory Board, thus adding weight to the campaign's claim to be the only genuinely worldcentric integral politics currently available.

Simpol at Celebrate Life Festival and Integral Politics Congress

Following on from the successful launch of Simpol-Germany in June 2012, **John Bunzl** has been invited to present Simpol at two up-coming conferences: Firstly, on 29th July at the Celebrate Life Festival being held near Bremen, Germany. Then, on 31st July, at the Integral Politics Congress (Kongress für Integrale Politik) in Götzis, Austria.

New national websites

With supporters in over 70 countries around the world, new national websites are being launched to gain further support from both citizens and politicians. The following sites are now online, so if you are citizen in any of these countries, please contact your national campaign and get involved! Simpol-USA, Simpol-Canada, Simpol-Espana, Simpol-New Zealand, and Simpol-Deutschland. For supporters in the UK, don't forget to visit http://uk.simpol.org.

John Bunzl at TEDx

Think globally? You may think you do. But to find out, see John Bunzl's TEDx talk "Thinking like Einstein". John explains what global thinking really means and why adopting it is vital if we're to solve global problems. Check it out!

EUROPE

27 June: Mr. Carlo Marinis, member of the Movement for Direct Democracy, Italy, has sent me an enlarged version of the Draft of a Constitution for the European Union; the original version had been sent last year. Regrettably, it seems that the text has not yet been put on any website. Those who want to read, discuss or publish it, please contact Mr.Marinis: democrazia@tin.it

Mr.Marinis writes: "This federal Constitution safeguards not only the unity of Europe but also the national identity of member States."

Any serious draft of a European Constitution should be put for discussion and later a referendum. Without such a procedure, the current Constitution, compiled by politicians only, is illegitimate. (JP)

EUROPA-MAGAZIN 1/2012

Roman Huber: Europa braucht mehr Demokratie Sigbjörn Gjelsvik: EWR-Diskussionen in Norwegen

Buchbesprechungen: **Widerspruch 61 -** "Diktatur der Finanzmärkte, EU-Krise und Widerstand"

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Geri Müller: Die Schweiz sollte Europäische
Verteidigungsagentur EVA verlassen

Michael Burkard: Die Rechtsprechung des EuGH zur Gentechnik in der Landwirtschaft

Kurzinfos

22 June: **Newsletter** sent round by Mrs. **Cora Pfafferott**, Democracy International (excerpts)

Dear members and friends of Democracy International,

Our Summer Academy 2012 is going ahead in the Bulgarian city of Burgas from 13 – 15 July 2012. Our three-day conference offers the unique opportunity to explore the state of (direct) democracy 21 years after adoption of Bulgaria´s democratic constitution and to see how direct democracy works in the Black Sea region of Burgas. 30 people have already registered. This is our final call. If you want to participate, please register immediately.

Also, I am delioghted to introduce myself to you as a new staff member of Democracy International. Today is my fifth day in the office and I am glad to send you a newsletter already. Before coming to Cologne I was a speechwriter with the European Commission in Brussels, and also I spent three years in Dublin where I worked on communicating the Lisbon Treaty in the context of the Irish referendum. At Democracy International I will develop our press and media activities, meaning you will receive more regularly our newsletter from now on. Please contact me if you have any idea for content or if you wish to give your feedback. I will be happy to hear from you and to get to know you.

All the best

Cora Pfafferott

Content:

- 1. Airport Munich: citizens against third runway
- 2. Parliament of Hamburg for more transparency preempting citizens' direct decision
- 3. "Europeans for Fair Roaming!", an example of a successful citizens' campaign
- 4. Buggy ECI software: Concession by the Commission

18 July: Sent round by Mrs. Cora Pfafferott: New Convention on EU Future. Declaration by Democracy International: (excerpts) From 12-15 July 2012 activists, experts, researchers, journalists and politicians from Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Russia, Austria, Germany, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Switzerland and Sweden met at the DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL Summer Academy in Burgas, Bulgaria to discuss the development of citizen participation and direct democracy in Europe. Declaration:

"Democracy is the most important issue of our time as political questions like climate change, the responsibility for resources and the environment, the state and quality of civil rights and politics on economic, financial and social issues depend on the quality of democracy and the question who takes the decision in the end.

Only a good democracy can guarantee good political decisions. A good democracy requires sound and fair elections, a wide range of instruments for citizen participation and consultation and, most importantly, the right for initiative and referenda. Today we see democracy in great danger.

Democracy is in danger in countries where governments sometimes do not work for the common good, but for their own personal, political and sometimes even economic interests. Democracy is in danger in the European Union, where important decisions are more and more taken by a small number of powerful politicians without asking the people and bypassing the only directly elected body of the EU, the European Parliament. And democracy is in danger in a world, where more and more political decisions are taken on an international or transnational level while democratic participation and control still lies with the

Democracy International calls for the right to initiative and referenda in all countries and on the local, regional, national or transnational level.

DEMOCRACY INTERNATIONAL strongly underlines that the future of Europe and European democracy cannot be decided only by representatives of governments, the central bank and other executive institutions. Only EU citizens can decide on the future of the European Union. Therefore, we call for a European Convention - as foreseen in Article 48 of the Treaty of the functioning of the EU - and for a europeanwide referendum on the outcome of this convention and on the future of the EU.

Gerald Häfner,

President of Democracy International, on behalf of the participants of the summer academy

THE WORLD

26 July, Letter from Mr.Klaus Hofmann, Global Forum Organization Team:

"Dear Friend,

from 14 until 16 November the 2012 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy will take place in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Like 2010 in San Francisco (http://sites.activatedirect. com/2010globalforum.com/) the upcoming event in Montevideo will offer a unique opportunity to connect with the growing world of modern direct democracy. You will be able to share information with professionals from civil society, politics, media, business, academia and administration from all over the world, learn about experiences with direct democracy in South America and elsewhere on the globe!

For more information and registration please visit: http://2012globalforum.com/

or write to: hofmann@democracy-international.org "

Practical Information

The 2012 Forum is an open and free event. Participants cover their own costs including travel, accommodations and meals. In addition to direct flights into/from Montevideo (momondo.com), there are good connections via Buenos Aires (and from there by Rio de la Plata ferry, busquebus.com). Forum participants get special accommodation offers at selected hotels in Montevideo (2012globalforum.com/lodging) if they book by September 10. During the Forum arrangements will be made for affordable meals.

Briefing and excursion tours are subject to various fees - for more information and updates check out the 2012globalforum-website or contact kaufmann@2012globalforum.com.

REGISTER NOW at 2012globalforum.com and forum organizers will keep you updated. For more info, check out the website, contact info@2012globalforum.com or visit us at Facebook (https://www.facebook. com/groups/111365802230576/).





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JIRI POLAK, ASSARHUSAVÄGEN 64. S-24736, S. SANDBY, SWEDEN

PHONE: 046/58891, E-MAIL: JIRI POLAK@SWIPNET.SE





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