**Explanatory memorandum
to Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)1
of the Committee of Ministers to member states
on e-democracy**

Background

1.   The Committee of Ministers Recommendation on e-democracy sets out recommendations, principles and guidelines concerning e-democracy, which are designed to apply to e-democracy the democracy and human rights principles established, *inter alia,* by existing Council of Europe instruments and other international instruments. The Recommendation is accompanied by a set of indicative guides, as further suggestions for possible action.

2.   The Recommendation is based on the work done by the Ad hoc Committee on E-Democracy (CAHDE), an intergovernmental group open to all Council of Europe member states. CAHDE was set up by the Committee of Ministers and entrusted with the task of examining developments in the field of e-democracy and making recommendations to the Committee of Ministers on possible further action in that field, as part of the Council of Europe's agenda of strengthening democracy and good governance. Further to an initial analysis of the scope of its terms of reference and of good e-democracy practice in member states, CAHDE considered it appropriate that a text be prepared for adoption by the Committee of Ministers as a recommendation to member states.

3.   In its work, CAHDE has greatly benefited from the input of many experts, on whose expertise it was possible to draw on the occasion of a number of events that CAHDE organised jointly with an array of partners, including DEMO-Net and the national authorities and parliaments which hosted informal CAHDE working group meetings and related events. The input of these partners is gratefully acknowledged. Lastly, the conclusions of the Forum for the Future of Democracy 2008 (Madrid 15-17 October), the theme of which was e-democracy, have been taken into account in this Recommendation.

4.   CAHDE also acknowledged past and ongoing work on e-democracy by the EU and other international organisations, in particular the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) The aforementioned organisations had observer status with CAHDE and were represented at several of its meetings and other events in which CAHDE was involved as co-organiser.

5.   The European Commission has, over the last few years, supported a number of work packages designed to pilot e-participation tools (via DG INFSO) as well as DemoNet, an EU-funded project carried out by academics and experts, and has set up several funded e-democracy practitioner networks, such as PepNet.[1] The declaration by the EU Ministerial Conference on e-government of September 2007 invited the European Commission to "build on the ongoing e-Participation exploratory action and define future support mechanisms to explore and exploit the benefits of e-Participation, identify good practice cases and stimulate the exchange of experiences gained by Member States". CAHDE also took note of the work done by the European Parliament on e-participation and by the Council of the European Union on e-justice.

6.   The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) actively supports the UN Member States' efforts to promote e-governance initiatives and implementation. It does this in particular by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences via the platform established within the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) Portal and by researching and compiling cases published in the "Compendium on E-Government Innovative Practices" and the "Compendium of ICT Applications on Electronic Government"; by promoting policy dialogue and advocacy for mainstreaming the use of information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) and by publishing the "UN E-Government Survey". As part of the E-Government Survey, UNDESA has devised a Global E-Government Readiness Index. This tool includes an e-participation index which assesses the quality and usefulness of information and services provided by a country for the purpose of engaging its citizens in public policy making through the use of e-government programmes.

7.   Moreover, in cooperation with the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), UNDESA assists legislatures around the world to harness ICT in support of their representative, legislative and oversight functions (e-parliament). It does so through the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament, which acts as a clearing house for information, research, and innovation and provides technical assistance by mobilising multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament issues a biennial World e-Parliament Report and convenes annually the World e-Parliament Conference. Finally, the Global Centre fosters the sharing of experiences and practices among members of parliament on policies and legislations favoring the development of an inclusive Information Society.

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[1] For further information, see: http://www.epractice.eu/community/eParticipation

8.   The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has been promoting e-democracy in support of environmentally sustainable development in the context of the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (Aarhus Convention).

9.   The OECD has conducted research on e-democracy. The book "*Promise and problems of e-democracy: challenges of online citizen engagement*"[2] (2003) examines the use of new information and communication technologies in engaging citizens in policy-making in OECD member countries. The book "*Evaluating Public Participation in Policy Making*" (2005) looks at theory and practice, and draws heavily upon the insights and contributions of government experts, scholars and civil society practitioners from OECD countries. It builds upon the findings of a previous OECD report, "*Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation"* (2001), which highlighted the lack of systematic evaluation of government efforts to engage citizens and civil society in policy making. Through this book, the OECD strives to close the "evaluation gap".[3]

Structure and scope of the recommendation

10.   After the preambular paragraphs, the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on e-democracy sets out a series of recommendations to member states. These are further elaborated on under the principles of e-democracy, which include the essential messages concerning e-democracy, and under the guidelines on e-democracy, which include detailed recommendations to different stakeholders.

11.   The Recommendation is accompanied by a series of indicative guides: a set of generic tools and policies for an electronic democracy, a roadmap approach to e-democracy, a checklist for the introduction of e-democracy tools, a framework for reporting e-democracy initiatives, a guide to evaluating e-democracy, and a glossary.

12.   Even though e-democracy is primarily about democracy, the intention was not to draw up a set of recommendations concerning democracy in general. The principles and guidelines in the recommendation address only those matters that are of specific relevance to e-democracy. The general principles and guidelines applicable to democracy are not repeated. The purpose of the Recommendation is to enable all stakeholders to apply common principles and guidelines when developing and implementing e-democracy.

13.   It also needs to be borne in mind that the widespread use of ICT in democratic practice and participation is possible only in an enabling environment in which public authorities provide a stable regulatory framework. Such a framework needs to offer an incentive to the private sector to invest in ICT infrastructure and services, and promote and enhance access to widely available and affordable ICT infrastructure, the Internet and public online services, as well as to relevant education and training. The strategies and policies for building and maintaining such an enabling environment are, however, beyond the scope of this Recommendation.

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[2] http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/11/35176328.pdf
[3] For further information, see: http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3343,en_2649_34129_40758338_1_1_1_1,00.html

Reasons for introducing or considering the introduction of e-democracy

14.   The world of the 21st century is electronic and mobile. The end of the last century clearly showed trends towards this digitalisation of society. It is therefore not surprising that this digital trend should be affecting many other facets of life. The concepts of e-government, e-democracy and e-participation are thus being debated and implemented in various ways, as there is an increasing demand for participation in the public decision-making process. Indeed, the Internet can be viewed as an opportunity to bridge the gap between governors and the governed. In a sense, institutions seem to have been unable to take advantage of new technology.

15.   Today e-democracy is still in its infancy. It seems that it was only a few years ago that websites with political information were launched. The same applies to the development of the first e-democracy tools for e-forums and e-voting; the focus was on facilitating the use of 20th-century political methods with 21st-century technology. Web 2.0 provides opportunities, such as conflict-resolution and other group decision-making tools and technology that could be seized for the purposes of radically transforming and enhancing democracy through technology. Arguably, most of the technology required to support the functions included in participatory instruments is readily available.

16.   It is not just a range of public authorities that afford ICT a prominent place in their strategies for change: other organisations and groups increasingly use the Internet for activism and debate as well. E-democracy can bring about changes for the better and is not always driven or managed by government.

17.   One way of increasing the impact of e-democracy on the democratic process is to identify contexts in which many of its goals are being met and provide the missing pieces. These missing pieces are more likely to be connecting nodes than stand-alone websites: the network provided by the Internet is a major enabler of e-democracy. Once it is acknowledged that various people and organisations also instigate, generate and manage democracy, more online places where e-participation, though not labelled as such, is thriving will be recognised. The challenge will be how best to support these with quality information and channel their expertise and output towards policy-makers.

The Recommendation on e-democracy

18.   The principles and guidelines in this Recommendation build on, but do not replace, previous standard-setting work by the Council of Europe, which includes, in particular, the texts listed in the Appendix to this Explanatory Memorandum.

Paragraph 1. "Consider making use of…"

19.   The terms "democracy", "democratic institutions" and "democratic processes" are used in this Recommendation. The concept of democracy reflects the two principles of democracy. The first is that all members of the society have equal access to power and the second is that all members enjoy universally recognised freedoms. Democratic institutions, including NGOs, are necessary because democracy is not restricted to occasional elections, and institutions are therefore needed to guide and safeguard democracy. Democratic processes refer to the way decisions are taken within these institutions and democratic rights are protected.

20.   E-democracy is above all about democracy and not simply about technology. The evolution of e-democracy through the use of enhanced technology should therefore be based on and pursued in accordance with the principles of democratic governance and practice. E-democracy and its tools are presented in this Recommendation as additional opportunities for democracy and are neither generally recommended nor discouraged. (See principles 1, 2 and 6).

Paragraph 2. "Consider and implement e-democracy…"

21.   This paragraph contains a description of the term "e-democracy", on which the Recommendation is based.

Paragraph 3. "Introduce, develop or review e-democracy policies …"

22.   The principles and guidelines appended to the Recommendation are mostly based on best-policy practice in member states, which was collated and analysed by CAHDE.

23.   The precise domestic arrangements and hence the implications of implementing the principles and guidelines will vary from country to country. It is likely that no one member state will have an e-democracy policy and practice or e-democracy legislation that comply with all principles set out in the Recommendation. A review of domestic policies and practice and, where it is deemed appropriate, legislation, using the principles and guidelines in the Appendix as a benchmark, is therefore recommended as a relevant and worthwhile undertaking in all member states.

Paragraph 4. "Consider, when introducing and…"

24.   The five indicative guides complement the Recommendation and the Explanatory Memorandum. They are addressed to those responsible for introducing e-democracy, provide examples of tools different stakeholders can use for the purposes of e-democracy and explain how to evaluate a tool or measure. The purpose of these documents is to provide guidance to any e-democracy stakeholder.

Paragraph 5. " Take steps, in co-operation with …"

25.   It is imperative that all stakeholders be involved in developing e-democracy concepts and standards, not least in order to forge public trust in e-democracy.

Paragraph 6. "When introducing, implementing and…"

26.   This paragraph sums up, in a number of indents, the principles and guidelines that are set out in detail in the Appendix to the Recommendation.

27.   "*fully complies with obligations…*": No activity by a public authority may violate human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular those which the country is obliged, under international standards, to respect. The Recommendation recognises the existence of different concepts and traditions and of different stages of democracy (see paragraph 7 of the introduction, principles 12 and 60 and guideline 13), but these cannot be used as a basis for infringing the basic values and precepts of democracy, or restricting the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

28.   "*is additional, complementary to* …": E-democracy is part of democracy, not a new type of democracy. It provides additional opportunities for democracy without undermining or supplanting traditional democratic processes, with which e-democracy methods have, as far as possible, to be compatible and interlinked (See principles 1, 2, 6, 27 penultimate indent and guidelines 5 and 73).

29.   "*maintains and enhances citizens' trust…*": Trust - in democracy, democratic institutions and democratic processes, and in fellow-citizens and politicians - is *the* precondition for democracy. Any activity concerning democracy has to take account of the need to establish, enhance and, if necessary, restore trust. (See principle and guideline 18.)

30.   " *supports the democratic roles …*": The so-called democracy "intermediaries" -for instance, democratic institutions (including political parties, other public or private law political institutions and NGOs), politicians and the media - are essential for democracy. The introduction of e-democracy does not circumvent or belittle these intermediaries but must actively include them in e-democracy methods (see principles 21 and 23 and guidelines 4 and 20 to 23).

31.   "*is based on and …*": For details, see principle 27, first and second indents.

32.   "*takes account of the …*": For details of the challenges, risks and barriers to e-democracy, see principles 69 to 72 and guideline 81; for risk-assessment, risk-management, evaluation and progress, see guidelines 66, 67, 71 and 72.

33.   "*helps to narrow the…*": See principle 64 and guidelines 73, 76 to 78 and 96.

34.   " *facilitates and enhances access…*": For details of technology transparency, open-source solutions and open standards and specifications, see principles 54 to 56 and guidelines 57 to 60.

35.   "*is embedded in balanced …*": For details of rules and regulations, see principles 73 to 80 and guidelines 82 to 103.

Paragraph 7 . "Fully implement the relevant …"

36.	While this Recommendation can be considered as a follow-up to and a substantial enhancement of the Recommendation on e-governance, the Recommendation on e-voting, conserves its full validity. This is the reason why issues relating to e-voting - the e-democracy method with the results that are most binding on public authorities - are not dealt with in detail in this Recommendation, but, in most cases, simply referred to (see principles 35, 36, 41, 42 and 78 and guidelines 86 and 96).[4]

Paragraph 8. "Take into account and…"

37.	In the conclusions of the 2008 session of the Forum for the Future of Democracy[5], the general rapporteurs propose different actions for different stakeholders with regard to e-democracy.

Paragraph 9. "Bring this Recommendation to…"

38.	The Recommendation on e-democracy is not addressed solely to member states and their national authorities. Since e-democracy has many stakeholders, it is of the utmost importance that other stakeholders, including civil society, local and regional authorities, the media and the business sector, should also be informed of the Recommendation and encouraged to apply it.

Paragraph 10. "Disseminate this Recommendation and …"

39.	All member states should actively disseminate the e-democracy Recommendation. This may be done, in particular, by including aspects of e-democracy in events organised on the International Day for Democracy proclaimed by the United Nations (15 September), and in European Local Democracy Week, initiated by the Council of Europe (mid-October). Activities in member states should be closely linked with activities in other member states, so as to build up European momentum in the field of e-democracy.

Paragraph 11. "Continue to address e-democracy…"

40.	This Recommendation constitutes the first comprehensive international document covering e-democracy in its entirety. It is thus only a first step in the presentation and description of e-democracy and the setting of relevant standards by an international (inter-governmental) organisation. Further work on specific areas of e-democracy is called for. The Council of Europe will, inter alia, continue with work on regulatory issues, consultations and bottom-up e-democracy, as these are areas in which the Council of Europe has special expertise and a particular interest. Other issues for possible further work in an e-democracy context include social cohesion, education and training, confronting the digital divide as well as identity management (e-identity), including its international interoperability.

Paragraph 12. "Review this Recommendation two years…"

41.	The Recommendation does not set up a new reporting system or open-ended follow-up activities. In the light of experience of the Council of Europe Recommendations on e-voting and e-governance (see paragraph 7 of the "Recommendations to member states"), the Council of Europe member states will review the application of this Recommendation two years after its adoption, on the basis of the experience gained. In order to prepare properly for such a review and effectively include academia and civil society, it is recommended that an academic conference co-hosted by the Council of Europe (like the ones held on two occasions on the Recommendation on e-voting, in Castle Hofen, Austria) and an online activity organised by civil society take place before the meeting devoted to the review.

Instructs the Secretariat to…

42.	In this Recommendation, the Committee of Ministers not only makes recommendations and proposes guidelines to member states and other stakeholders in member states, but also instructs the Council of Europe Secretariat to exploit the opportunities offered by e-democracy. The Secretariat has already taken initiatives in this connection. These include the use of e-voting in internal elections, launching

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[4] For the Recommendation on e-voting see:
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=778189&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75
For the Recommendation on e-governance see:
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=802805&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75
[5] Documentation from the 2008 Session of the Forum for the Future of Democracy can be found at:
http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/forum_democratie/default_en.asp

the Council of Europe's channel on YouTube and its page on Facebook, and providing webcasts of public hearings of the European Court of Human Rights.

43.	Because of its statutory status within the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers cannot act in the same way as the other pillars of the Council of Europe (the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs). It appears logical, however, that the other pillars and bodies of the Council of Europe should take into account and implement this Recommendation (with regard to e-democracy and international institutions, see principles 9, 15 and 36).

Principles of e-democracy

Principle 1: "E-democracy, as the support …"

44.	The first sentence contains a basic description of the term "e-democracy" (see also paragraph 2 of the Recommendation). If the potential of e-democracy is to be achieved, it has to be understood that e-democracy is about democracy. The main objective of e-democracy is therefore to support existing democratic processes. E-democracy opens up additional channels of communication among citizens themselves, between citizens and public authorities, among public authorities themselves and with all other stakeholders. At the same time, traditional channels will continue to be used.

Principle 2: "E-democracy is one of…"

45.	In order to not exclude any stakeholder from participating in democracy, it is imperative that these channels be only used as additional channels. E-democracy provides, in particular, tools for distance invitation to, viewing of, participation in, and voting at, political meetings, including parliament. It also provides tools for online availability of documents and proceedings of democratic institutions by live-streaming or viewing-on-demand.

Principle 3: "E-democracy is based on…"

46.	In order to ensure the proper use of e-democracy, a political system based on democratic, human, social, ethical and cultural values needs to be in place. This allows e-democracy to flourish. Democracy and democratic concepts are based on values, some of which are historic, constitute a common European heritage and are universal, while others are based on a consensus in the society in question. Neither of these two sets of values may contradict the other (See paragraph 6 of the preamble to the Recommendation and guideline 3).

Principle 4. "E-democracy is closely linked…"

47.	Being democracy-oriented, good governance (see Recommendation Rec(2004)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on electronic governance ("e-governance")), a concept which is defined/described here for the purposes of this Recommendation, is closely linked to e-democracy and has similar goals (see principle 17 and guideline 3). While e-government in the strict sense (as described in introductory paragraph of the chapter on 'Guidelines on e-democracy') may or may not be regarded as part of e-democracy, it is not included in this Recommendation as it may also be implemented outside a democratic framework.

Principle 7. "E-democracy concerns all sectors …"

48.	In this paragraph, "sectors of democracy" refers to the three branches of the state: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The term "all levels of government" refers to local, regional, national and international authorities. At democracy levels with smaller numbers of constituencies, i.e. at local and regional levels, the potential for e-democracy methods is especially high because of issues closer to the everyday lives of the constituencies, a smaller number of participants, simpler decision-making and easier corrections of mistakes.

Principle 8: "E-democracy stakeholders are all…"

49.	E-democracy stakeholders include, in particular, public authorities at all levels, politicians, elected representatives, political parties, civil servants, citizens, electors, members of (public law) corporations and associations, civil society, NGOs, the media and businesses, including providers of infrastructure. It is important to realise that e-democracy is not intended only for certain groups or stakeholders, certain sectors,

certain types of participation or certain stages. E-democracy is for everybody, regardless of what channel is used and at what stage.

Principle 10. "Recommendations on e-democracy cannot …"

50.   This paragraph refers to the "multi-stakeholder approach" of this Recommendation, which is addressed not only to member states but also to public authorities (including elected representative assemblies) at all levels, civil society and its institutions, the media, academia and the economic sector (including technology providers). For the different stakeholders, see principle 8 and guidelines 10 and 12.

Principle 11: "Any type of participation …"

51.   The Recommendation acknowledges the existence of different concepts and traditions as well as different stages of democracy. A basic feature of the Recommendation is the underlying concept that e-democracy does not lead to a different type of democracy from that which exists where it is implemented. Fundamentally, e-democracy is not designed to change democracy or the type of democracy that exists in the place where it is introduced. E-democracy and e-participation methods can be classified in various ways. In most cases, a three-tiered classification is used according, for instance, to the degree of interaction and the binding force of the result (information - communication - transaction) or the degree of participation (information - communication – participation)[6]. Some propose a four-tiered classification (e.g. information-consultation- co-operation- co-determination/ (co-) decision, or, more in relation to e-government: information – one-way interaction – two-way interaction – full electronic case handling[7]. This Recommendation uses a three-tiered classification and, as far as possible, all the terms proposed by the many available classifications.

Principle 12: "E-democracy can be implemented…"

52.   It is important to understand that e-democracy does not promote a particular type of democracy. E-democracy is not designed to promote, for example, direct democracy. The purpose of e-democracy is to facilitate democratic practice, not to promote a certain type of democracy.

Principle 13. " In particular, e-democracy can …"

53.   Today we are witnessing the first generation of "digital natives". Young people are a specific, though diverse, group of stakeholders. They have technology and media literacy skills. Many youth groups already use e-democracy to govern themselves. There are topics in which young people need to be specifically involved, for example environmental issues with long-term consequences. One way of getting the young generation involved in democracy and politics is therefore to approach them through the channels they use, i.e. by means of e-democracy, so as to ensure that the wishes and demands of the younger generation are not neglected.

Principle 14. "NGOs can both benefit…"

54.   Civil society and its institutions, including NGOs, are important (e-)democracy stakeholders. E-democracy methods can make NGOs more attractive and reduce their costs. At the same time, citizens can test out e-democracy with NGOs in order to become acquainted with it and come to trust it, before using the e-democracy methods offered by public authorities.

Principle 15. " E-democracy can be of …"

55.   In many regions, traditional borders are increasingly not seen as boundaries. One of the benefits of e-democracy is that it can transcend traditional borders. Civic groups and other organisations are now better able to organise themselves across borders by means of various e-democracy methods, thereby enlarging the scope of cross-border democracy. (For minorities, see principle 31 and guideline 75).

Principle 16. "Public authorities can benefit …"

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[6] These approaches have been developed by A. Macintosh and by OECD PUMA Policy Brief No. 10, July 2001: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/24/34/2384040.pdf

[7] See EU Commission Programme Interoperable Delivery of European e-Government Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (IDABC)

56.   Civil society can play a large role in the design and development of e-democracy. Grassroots initiatives should be given time and space to develop, because the grassroots know what is important within their community. This paragraph therefore calls on public authorities to make a special effort to listen to, learn from and work together with civil society.

57.   As e-democracy can be top-down, bottom-up or horizontal (see principle 59), the role of the public authorities is not only to set up e-democracy but also to take advantage of, and create links with, existing e-democracy methods set up and used by civil society (see guideline 14). This provides a solution to the challenge of how to link C2C activities with public authorities, thereby ensuring effective bottom-up C2G.

Principle 17. "The goals of e-democracy …"

58.   (See principle 4.) Transparency can be attained by providing access to information, for example by making it available online. Accountability and responsiveness can be achieved by taking responsibility for decisions, and by making sure that the needs of stakeholders are taken into account. This entails the use of modern facilities like the Internet, which citizens use in their daily lives. E-democracy facilitates the participation of stakeholders, and this makes it possible to intensify engagement and discussion. An example is e-consultation.

59.   Inclusiveness, accessibility and participation all relate to the fact that e-democracy provides new opportunities to engage in democracy, and hence gets more people involved, including people who were unable to become so before. E-inclusion, e-parliament and social networks are examples.

60.   Subsidiarity means the regulation of, and decision on, issues at the lowest possible competent level of government rather then taking every decision systematically at a high level.

61.   One of the most important goals of e-democracy is to foster trust in democracy as a whole. An example is the opportunities e-democracy provides for more transparency in information and processes, which ensures that stakeholders receive more information. Another example is the fact that stakeholders have more options for voicing their opinions through tools such as e-forums and e-petitions. Public authorities also have more means of obtaining input from stakeholders through e-consultations and e-initiatives. What is important in this latter example is that public authorities should be receptive to stakeholders, who need to be persuaded that their input is valued and will be adequately considered. It will take more than technology, however, to improve trust between people and their representatives.

62.   E-democracy can bring people together, particularly in a context of cultural diversity. E-neighbourhood, where citizens from the same neighbourhood discuss and participate in the agenda setting and decision-making on sub-local issues (including urban planning) is an example. This can lead to a greater social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

Principle 18. "Trust is indispensable for…"

63.   See the explanatory paragraph on trust to paragraph 6 of the Recommendation and principle 17.

Principle 19. "E-democracy makes for greater…" and principle 20. " E-participation is the support…"

64.   E-participation is an important element of e-democracy. E-participation can empower people and give them more opportunities to become involved in democratic processes. The public authorities may, in turn, be party to people's knowledge of circumstances affecting their lives that would otherwise remain undisclosed. Many of the exciting physical participatory processes could benefit from, and be better implemented through, e-participation tools, which often reflect innovative approaches. See also principles 6 and 29.

Principle 20. "E-participation is the support …"

65.   E-participation by individuals and groups is a decisive concept but not the only factor of e-democracy. Others are, e.g. e-parliament, e-justice and e-inclusion.

Principle 21. "E-democracy does not in …"

66.   Decision-makers may feel threatened by the development of e-democracy. They think that e-democracy may take away some of their tasks, duties and responsibilities. It has to be made clear to decision-makers that this is not what e-democracy is about. E-democracy can, on the contrary, facilitate the work of decision-makers. E-democracy provides decision-makers with new and additional opportunities to communicate with citizens in a direct and effective way. Examples include the use of websites like Facebook or MySpace. Such social networking tools provide politicians with new means of communicating effectively with the electorate, especially at election time. Just as so-called e- democracy "intermediaries" continue to play a role (see also the explanatory paragraph to paragraph 6 of the Recommendation, concerning intermediaries), formal and informal decision-makers should not be sidelined by e-democracy, but potentially helped by e-democracy methods and therefore invited to make use of them (see guidelines 4 and 20 to 23).

Principle 22. "E-democracy requires information …"

67.   The enabling conditions listed in this principle require a culture in which freedom of expression and access to information can be enjoyed by everyone and are protected by democratic institutions and the legal system.

Principle 23. "The media play a crucial role…"

68.   E-democracy depends on support from the media. These include the traditional media, such as newspapers and television, but also new media that reach their users via the Internet and digital television. They inform people about the availability of e-democracy initiatives and tools and the opportunities they provide. In addition, many media provide scope for citizens and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and engage in discussion and debate.

Principle 24. "New media and providers…" and principle 25. "E-democracy is an integral …"

69.   A number of e-democracy tools have been specifically developed for interaction between, for example, politicians and citizens. However, other applications for use on the Internet and other new technologies also deserve to be considered by stakeholders. Examples are social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace or YouTube. These applications have not been designed specifically for e-democracy, but they can be, and are, widely used by stakeholders for issues and processes of democracy and thus play an increasingly important role in e-democracy. Community (e-)media are of special importance because of their relevance to any discussion about the right to communicate, to supporting and enhancing democracy, and to public participation in and through media. Community (e-)media is a necessary aspect of citizens participation in media and thus of practical importance in securing public partnership and in supporting and enhancing democracy.

Principle 27. "If e-democracy is to …"

70.   This paragraph contains some key concepts that are used throughout the Recommendation and the appendices. This terminology also needs to be taken into account when the Recommendation or parts of it are translated into languages other than the official languages of the Council of Europe. A separate glossary contains explanations of the additional terms used.

Principle 29. "E-democracy can bring together …"

71.   (See principle 6.)

Principle 30. " Because it opens up …"

72.   As democracy is never accomplished or perfect, shortcomings or deficits in democratic practice exist. They may be caused by inflexible systems, a lack of effective control mechanisms, compliance deficits in respect of political promises and decisions, or corruption by state organs. Other causes include social, racial or regional segregation, strong barriers to access, communication and participation by ethnic minorities, long-term residents of foreign nationality and persons with special needs. Moreover, there is a widespread feeling in some countries that some mass media play an unduly dominating role in the public debate or that media are strongly under the control of political parties and/or market actors. The above-mentioned phenomena can lead to declining numbers of participants in democratic processes, low interest of young persons in public affairs, but also to the rise and attraction of populist political groups and of demagogic practices by various

quarters of public life and consequently to declining legitimacy and relevance of democratic institutions and processes and a decline of trust in them as well as to an increasing feeling of political discontent and disaffection among citizens.

73.   Such shortcomings and deficits may be mitigated by new means of information, communication, deliberation and participation - e.g. by e-parliament, e-consultation and e-petitioning - as well as by enhancing transparency, accountability, reactivity, speed and ubiquitous accessibility, thus empowering people to engage in inclusive participation in formal and informal democratic processes, in particular in decision-making - which e-democracy provides. (See also paragraph 9 of the preamble to this Recommendation, and guidelines 35 to 37).

Principle 31. "E-democracy has great …"

74.   E-democracy can be used to bring people together. This can be of great value, in particular, for minorities, especially those who live in different countries and depend on cross-border co-operation. The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (CETS 157) needs to be taken into account in this context. (See principle 15.)

Principle 32. "By providing a means …"

75.   E-democracy has the potential to involve groups that suffer from exclusion in democratic processes. In order to achieve this, special attention must be paid to those who need help in acquiring the skills required to become active e-citizens, in particular the ability to use the Internet, and to education for democratic citizenship.

Principle 33. "E-democracy can enhance the…"

76.   E-democracy methods are particularly well suited to the cross-border and international level. See also guideline 38.

Principle 34. "E-democracy requires inter-disciplinary…"

77.   Academia, in particular, needs to contribute to e-democracy. Academics need to work together when carrying out (international) research and publish their findings. Given the various approaches to and views on e-democracy in academic circles and the need to harness quality expertise from many sectors, representative assemblies, governments and the business sector, as well as international institutions, need to encourage and fund research on e-democracy.

Sectors of e-democracy

Principle 35." E-democracy encompasses, in particular…"

78.   This list of sectors of e-democracy is indicative, not exhaustive, and includes only those aspects of (e-)government that have implications for democracy (e.g. e-environment - see principle 40 - but not e-health, to take just one example.). Each of the sectors listed is explained above. The second indicative list (e-participation, e-deliberation, e-forums) refers to ways and means of serving e-democracy across different sectors. These terms are described in principle 20, principle 27 (last indent) and the glossary, respectively.

Principle 36. "E-parliament is the use …"

79.   In this Recommendation, the term "parliament" refers to any elected representative assembly at local, regional, national and international level. E-parliament concerns any person involved in such assemblies - members, political and administrative staff, electors, citizens and media - and encompasses in particular information, communication, deliberation, participation, agenda- and decision-shaping and -making as well as transparency and accountability.

80.   E-parliament has to take account of the realities of today's information and communication society and provide tools to members, staff and administration as well as to electors, which are similar to tools used in the citizens' everyday lives, in order to place parliament prominently in the citizens' and electors' lives and their working habits.

81.   E-parliament can, by enhanced transparency, participation and - thus - legitimacy counteract trends and impressions of a reduced role and declining legitimacy of parliaments.

Principle 37." E-legislation is the use…"

82.   The ICT-based drafting and introduction of legislation by elected representative assemblies is called 'e-law'.

Principle 38. "E-justice is the use of ICT…"

83.   E-justice can play a large role in reducing the gap between citizens and the courts. E-justice is not about transferring judicial powers to Internet users. It is about offering resources to citizens, who will, for example, be better able to acquire information about the courts and legal procedures (from websites) and how to institute certain types of legal proceedings (electronic application forms), follow the progress of proceedings (through access to up-to-date information on the Internet) and pay court registry fees through online banking. Moreover, comprehensive, quality legal information makes it possible for citizens to exercise their rights consciously and effectively and take advantage of the safeguards established by the judicial system.

84.   Another example of e-justice is the use of videoconferencing. This can not only lead to internal savings and improved efficiency of the courts themselves: it can also offer additional facilities to certain parties involved. Examples are victims of crime, persons covered by witness protection programmes, minors, etc. These people would not be obliged to attend trial, but could give their witness statements in a safe, individually-tailored environment.

85.   E-justice can also facilitate the handling of cases involving people residing in different countries. It also provides citizens with quicker and easier access to legal proceedings in other countries and enables them to find out which regulations apply. Another benefit may be to exchange data held, for example, in business registers and bankruptcy registers.

Principle 39. "E-mediation is the use…"

86.   There are ICT-enabled methods emerging in the field of mediation that have the potential to defuse conflicts by not requiring the parties to physically face each other. Some methods provide for automated on-line mediation, whereby the tool (and not a person) acts as mediator, proposing options for resolving the conflictual issues.

Principle 40. "E-environment is the use…"

87.   E-environment includes the use of ICT-based systems for access to and the dissemination of environmental data and information as well as the establishment of ICT-supported monitoring systems and repositories for environmental knowledge. E-environment thus makes it possible to forecast and monitor the impact of natural and manmade factors and other pressures on the environment, and to determine the current state of the environment, which in turn makes it easier to formulate potential responses because it is possible to call on a broader, more widely disseminated knowledge base.

88.   Spatial planning and spatial cohesion are both basic components of the e-environment field, and ones that constitute major challenges for nation states and regional and local authorities. In May 2008, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted a report and recommendation on "*Electronic democracy and deliberative consultation on urban projects*".[8]

89.   The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters includes provisions calling on contracting parties to use electronic information tools to provide public access to environmental information. To this end, the Parties to the Convention set up a Task Force to facilitate implementation of the Convention through the effective use of electronic information tools designed to provide public access to environmental information

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[8] Link to recommendation (Recommendation 249 (2008)) and related documents:
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1278871&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679)

Principle 41. "E-elections, e-referendums and e-initiatives …" and principle 42. "E-voting is an election…"

90.   See explanatory paragraph to paragraph 7 of the Recommendation.

Principle 47."E-polling/e-surveying allow opinions…"

91.   The term "e-poll(ing)" is used deliberately in this Recommendation and the Council of Europe in general to describe the sounding out of opinions outside an election or referendum context (the term is synonymous with e-surveying). The terms "election", "referendum" and "ballot" are reserved for statutory participation activities. E-polling/e-surveying are thus non-binding in nature: they are merely opinion polls and can be undertaken by public authorities and private bodies alike.

Technology

Principle 48. "ICT has led to …"

92.   Studies show that there is a growing e-readiness, i.e. readiness to use ICT, in European countries, albeit at significantly different levels. This trend is accompanied by the rapid emergence and launch of Web 2.0 services by civil society and businesses in a number of countries. People increasingly use mobile phones, the Internet and digital television to obtain information and conduct different types of transactions. They also expect public authorities to be accessible, available and approachable by these same means. By contrast, innovation in the public sector in this field is rather slow and problematical, and take-up of online public services is often low. There therefore appears to be a striking discrepancy between the widespread deployment and innovative use of ICT (for example the social web) in and by society on the one hand and awareness of, and engagement with, the social web by government departments on the other.

Principle 49. " While e-democracy is dependent …" to principle 51. " Technology is of secondary…"

93.   The primary goal of e-democracy is not to get people to use technology: it is about using technology to improve democratic governance and participation. E-democracy has to be driven by requirements of democracy, not technology. Neither ICT itself nor more or better technology alone automatically support or enhance democracy, democratic institutions and processes. Agreed democratic and human values and ethical considerations are inalienable parts of the technological aspects of e-democracy. The choice of tools does not only reflect the course of policy but also the implementation of values and ethical considerations. Beyond the role of ICT as means for exchanging and disseminating information, they also carry the capacity and vocation to improve the enjoyment of human rights.

94.   There are different reasons for introducing technology in the democratic process, for example falling election turnout, lack of interest in politics among young people, declining legitimacy and the gap between politicians/public authorities and citizens. However, technology must never be the reason for introducing e-democracy. Technology can be used to address these current challenges to democracy. E-solutions to these challenges include e-participation, e-parliament, e-petitioning and e-consultation.

Principle 52. "Technology is not neutral …"

95.   Using technology in the field of public participation in democratic governance invariably entails a change in the way those who govern engage with those they govern, and vice versa. On the one hand, transparency tends to be enhanced and dialogue and debate facilitated; on the other hand, there are potential risks, such as a loss of privacy and threats to data protection, and growing individualism among participants, which could lead to the fragmentation of society.

96.   Another aspect that is of importance when introducing technology in democracy is the fact that stakeholders need to be brought up to date with current developments and need to be able to understand and use the technology. If this is not the case, the public authorities need to take remedial action.

Principle 53. " Responsibility for the technology …"

97.   The institution operating the e-democracy tool is responsible for all aspects of the tool, for example privacy and fairness. Particular attention needs to be paid to security. An unsecured tool could become a danger to democracy, and cause stakeholders to lose confidence in e-democracy altogether.

Principle 54. " Making the source code available…" to principle 56. "The use of open-source solutions …"

98.	As explained earlier, transparency and trust are key factors in e-democracy (see principles 17 and 18 and guidelines 15, 16 and 79). In the case of technology, the use of open-source solutions, the availability of the source code and the use of open standards and specifications help to ensure transparency and trust. For further details, see guidelines 57 to 60.

Principle 57. "Applying the standards of …"

99.	When the Internet is used as an e-democracy tool, the relevant web pages need to be made available to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and impaired vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, restricted mobility, speech difficulties, photosensitivity and combinations of these. This paragraph therefore urges all member states to use the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines[9].

Principle 58. "The use of environment-friendly, …"

100.	ICT systems account for a significant part of the carbon footprint of a modern public sector body and other organisations. Strategies need to be drawn up to reduce ICT energy use and heat emissions, reduce and manage ICT waste, embrace flexible and mobile working in order to cut transport requirements and use technology, including computer software and hardware, to decrease other emissions and waste.

Introduction of e-democracy

Principle 59. "E-democracy can be introduced …"

101.	A common misconception is that e-democracy can be devised and implemented only by public authorities. Special attention must be paid to grassroots e-democracy initiatives. Public authorities therefore need to ensure that an environment exists or, if not, is created where creativity at grassroots level can be explored, developed and tested.

Principle 60. " In introducing e-democracy, account …"

102.	When introducing e-democracy, stakeholders will have to consider and decide what tools will best fit the form of democracy that prevails in the area in which they operate. Certain tools can, moreover, be used to emphasise certain features of the democratic system in question. For example, by using e-consultation or e-referenda, a country with direct democracy features could demonstrate that it values its direct democracy highly. See also the first indent of paragraph 6 of the Recommendation.

Principle 61. "E-democracy requires a balanced …"

103.	When introducing e-democracy, it is important that stakeholders not only focus on its introduction, but also strive to adjust other parts of the democratic process accordingly. If participants in e-democracy feel, for example, that participants' contributions are not taken into account, they are unlikely to become involved through that channel in the future. It is therefore necessary to create an environment in which all contributions can be, and are, reflected in the decision-making process.

Principle 62. "The introduction and implementation …"

104.	E-democracy cannot be introduced with a big bang. Different e-tools will, for example, have to be tested, e-democracy tools will have to be interlinked with traditional methods that continue to be used, procedures will have to be adjusted, and monitoring and evolution processes put in place. It is also important to adjust any e-democracy method to the context, taking account of cultural and political differences, as well as technology preferences. A step-by-step approach to the introduction of e-democracy may therefore be considered appropriate.

Principle 63. "E-democracy flourishes best where …"

105.	A prerequisite for introducing e-democracy is the existence of political will and leadership. Since e-democracy is about democracy, the introduction of e-democracy will affect all the various aspects of democracy. Without political will and leadership, the necessary changes cannot be made. It is not sufficient to

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[9] http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

make public consultation available online; rather, it will be necessary to rethink the entire process of consulting the public. For example, the issue of how the multiple responses received online are to be dealt with and how feedback to those who participated should be organised, will have to be addressed.

Principle 64. " E-democracy requires education …"

106.   Initial and further education, training and inclusion are preconditions for the implementation of e-democracy. E-inclusion means enabling all stakeholders, including, in particular, digitally disadvantaged persons and groups, to use the devices (hardware) and technology (software) required for participation in the information society easily and effectively. In the context of this Recommendation, e-inclusion refers to inclusion not only in technology but also in (e-)democracy (see guidelines 73, 76, 77 and 78 and paragraph 6, indent 10 of the Recommendation).

107.   There will always be groups that are willing to participate in e-democracy, but do not know how. These "unable willing" can become participants with access to, and training in, e-democracy. Special attention should be paid to supporting specific sections of society (for example the elderly and socially vulnerable groups). This can be done if local authorities help to set up local social solidarity networks to provide training and access to ICT without discrimination, irrespective of nationality, religion, gender, language and racial or social group. As some excluded people become digitally included, the digital divide will narrow. It should be realised, however, that digital inclusion may also deepen the digital divide – those who are still left behind may become more entrenched in their exclusion.

108.   The "able unwilling" have access to, and the skills to use, e-democracy, but decide not to do so. For this group of people, other issues may be at stake, for example a general lack of trust in public authorities. Public authorities have to consider conducting research in order to find out how to involve this group and then take the necessary measures.

Principle 66. "The introduction and operation…"

109.   Given the existence of certain risks to e-democracy stemming from possible misuse and the fragmentation of communities (see principle 72 and guideline 70), some overview and/or control of e-democracy methods seem to be needed. It will be up to each public authority and society to determine ways and means of carrying out such an overview and/or such control. Any such overview and/or control and any related procedures and institutions must be based on the principles of democracy.

Principle 67."International co-operation can greatly…"

110.   See guidelines 78 and 79.

Enablers, challenges, barriers and risks

Principle 68. "Enablers of e-democracy can …"

111.   E-democracy enablers are factors and players that are important for the emergence and successful deployment of meaningful e-democracy initiatives. Factors and players are interlinked: players are influenced by factors and, in turn, influence them. It is also important to understand that e-democracy initiatives can emerge not only from a favourable environment and positive action on the part of the players concerned; they can also emerge in response to an unfavourable environment, the inadequacy of the players or flaws or weaknesses in the functioning of democracy in general.

Principle 72. The risks attached to …"

112.   Misuse of e-democracy can be deliberate or accidental. In both cases, safeguards and sanctions are needed. The same applies to the undemocratic use of e-democracy by public and private players and to the deliberate blocking or restriction by public authorities of access to existing e-democracy tools (see guideline 87).

113.   The use of e-democracy methods may lead to the fragmentation of communities (and the media), which may, in turn, undermine democratic and community cohesion as well as the legitimacy of the opinions obtained by e-democracy methods (see guideline 70).

Rules and regulatory frameworks

Principle 73. "E-democracy requires rules and …"

114.   There is a persistent call for regulation of e-democracy, but such regulation must be democracy-focused, i.e. it must allow, and encourage, participation (see guidelines 82 and 94). There is a need for regulation in order, in particular, to fill the regulatory gaps created by the use of ICT for democracy purposes, and it is necessary to adapt existing regulations in the light of developments in e-democracy (see principle 77 and guidelines 90 and 91).

115.   Regulation is also an important factor in helping stakeholders to maintain or regain their trust in e-democracy. It is important that rules and regulations should be in place in order to help protect the interests of stakeholders.

116.   Rules and regulations governing e-democracy need to be designed in such a way that there is room to experiment with e-democracy. An open approach of this kind can work well only if an environment is created in which such experiments are not limited by strict rules or regulations, other than those designed to protect the rights of the individual and the general regulations providing protection against all forms of abuse on the Internet and through other digital technologies.

Principle 74. "Regulation of e-democracy entails…"

117.   Regulation should at the same time empower, i.e. enable citizens to meaningfully participate, and safeguard the rights and legitimate interests of persons. These include the protection of personal data, the limitation of public authorities' powers and the prevention of and sanctions against misuse of e-democracy. Regulation is not limited to the domain of public authorities (e.g. constitution, laws, regulations and soft-law options). As demonstrated in a number of member states, self-regulation by users and/or providers can represent good and effective regulation for e-democracy methods.

Principle 75. " All e-democracy participants have to …"

118.   Any person or institution engaging in e-democracy (e.g. by setting up e-democracy tools or publishing opinions in the public electronic sphere) has to do so in a transparent way (i.e. making it clear who undertook the activity and who is responsible for it) and shoulder all the legal consequences of such action (see guideline 80).

Principle 76. " The human rights standards …"

119.   When designing e-democracy, it is necessary to uphold human rights. In an information society context, particular attention needs to be paid to the right to respect for private life and correspondence, the right to freedom of expression, the right to education and the right to free elections.

Principle 77. " In the light of …"

120.   It also needs to be borne in mind that, before new rules are designed, existing rules and regulations should be reviewed to see if they need to be corrected.

Principle 79. "E-democracy requires attention to …"

121.   It is important to establish semantic standards, particularly for the purposes of cross-border e-democracy.

Principle 80. "Standardisation of terminology can…"

122.   On the term "trans-border" see explanatory paragraph to guideline 44.

Guidelines on e-democracy

Guideline 1. "When introducing, reviewing and…" and guideline 2. "Technology should not be…"

123.   When discussing e-democracy, there often is a tendency to focus on technology instead of democracy and its stakeholders. Technology should, however, be seen only as an enabling factor and facilitator. Technology should not be the reason for introducing e-democracy. When designing or introducing e-democracy, stakeholders should be central to the whole development process. Stakeholders will be the ones using e-democracy and the focus should therefore be on their wishes and demands.

Guideline 3. "E-democracy should be …"

124.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 4.

Guideline 4. "E-democracy should bring benefits…"

125.   It has to be communicated to all stakeholders what the expected benefits of the different tools are for the individual stakeholders.

Guideline 5. "In order to enhance…"

126.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 2.

Guideline 6. "The choice of specific…"

127.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 3.

Guideline 7. "E-democracy should allow for…"

128.   One of the reasons for introducing e-democracy is to empower citizens and other stakeholders. One result of the implementation of e-democracy should therefore be that citizens have more influence on policy-shaping and policy-making.

Guideline 8. "E-democracy, by overcoming barriers…"

129.   This constitutes a major benefit of e-democracy (see guideline 33; see guidelines 74 and 75 for other major benefits). By using the Internet, stakeholders will have more opportunities to become involved in democracy. Democracy is no longer dependent on the opening hours of public authority offices: stakeholders can become involved in their own time, when and where they want. The Internet also provides other opportunities, such as allowing many people to become involved in the same issue and/or at the same time. E-campaigning is a good example: an e-mail can be sent out or information can be placed on a web application to get people involved in the campaign or invite them to make a donation. This can be done much more quickly via the Internet, for example, than by sending out letters or going from door to door. Another example is YouTube, which allows a large audience to be reached within minutes.

Guideline 9. "E-democracy should encompass a wide…"

130.   It is imperative that e-democracy should not only concern interaction among different stakeholders, but also focus on e-democracy-related matters, such as legislation, documentation and archiving. One example is e-justice.

Guideline 10. "E-democracy stakeholders should …"

131.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 8.

Guideline 11. "E- democracy should target children…"

132.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 13.

Guideline 12. "NGOs, regardless of size…"

133.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 14.

Guideline 13. " When specific e-democracy measures…"

134.   When designing or implementing e-democracy, it is necessary to take account of the current status of ICT development in the area in which the e-democracy tool is to be applied. Unless mobile phones, the Internet or digital television are widely used, e-democracy cannot flourish. If e-democracy is introduced, care should be taken to ensure that particular stakeholder groups are not being given an undue advantage over others.

Guideline 14. "Public authorities and representative assemblies…"

135.   In order to understand the concerns of citizens better, politicians and civil servants should consider availing themselves of the information offered via social networking sites such as discussion forums, or provided by e-journalism. The opportunities offered by Web 2.0 are increasingly being embraced and those offered by Web 3.0 examined by public authorities and representative assemblies as a means of interacting with the public. (See explanatory paragraph to principle 16).

Guideline 15. "Transparency in e-democracy should…" and guideline 16. " Efforts to reach out …"

136.   Trust is a key factor in e-democracy. One way of establishing trust in e-democracy is to ensure transparency. It is therefore imperative that all stages in the process should be transparent to all stakeholders. This can be done by making sure that all information on procedures is available online and can be understood by everyone. Webcasts of meetings can also be used to ensure transparency. It should be clear to all involved what is happening at each stage of the process.

137.   E-democracy is an opportunity for all stakeholders to become more involved in democracy. An effort should therefore be made to include everybody and make sure that all stakeholders have a chance to participate. If such participation is interactive and participants receive feedback on how their input is being used, they are much more likely to become and stay involved. In this way active citizenship can be established. This will benefit democracy as a whole, including democracy across borders.

Guideline 17. "Public authorities and representative assemblies…"

138.   Dialogue and citizen-centred communication can be reinforced by e-democracy, for example by holding informal consultations, putting proposals on the Internet and seeking the opinions of citizens, or promoting transparency and accountability throughout the institutional system.

Guideline 18. "Trust in democracy, politicians…"

139.   E-democracy can succeed only if stakeholders trust it. Trust has to be established in all aspects of e-democracy. It is important that trust is forged not only in the tool itself (the software and hardware) but also in the enterprise that makes the tool, the procedures surrounding the tool and the public authorities involved. This can be done by, for example, ensuring transparency of procedures and using open-source software. (See explanatory paragraph to paragraph 6 of the Recommendation).

Guideline 20. "When e-democracy measures are …"

140.   Before any e-democracy measures are devised, an inventory of the wishes and demands of all stakeholders should be drawn up. There are e-tools available, for example e-forums, e-consultations, social networks, G2C and C2C, to facilitate such a process. This will help establish trust in e-democracy and improve the use of the tools later on.

Guideline 21. "The introduction of e-democracy…" to guideline 23. " In particular, politicians and …"

141.   See explanatory paragraph to recommendation 6 on intermediaries, principles 21 and 23 and guideline 4.

Guideline 24. "The media are invited …"

142.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 24.

Guideline 25. "The media are encouraged …"

143.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 23.

Guideline 26. "The media, in particular the …"

144.   Public service media's democratic role includes being universally accessible and inclusive by providing different groups of citizens with a forum to articulate and develop their interests and facilitating the search for society-wide political consensus. For more information on the remit of public service media in the information society, see Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2007)3.

Guideline 28. "As the information and …"

145.   The Internet of tomorrow will not be the same as the Internet of today. Web 2.0 is currently widely used, but Web 3.0 is already being developed. The term "Web 2.0" is used to describe new web-based applications designed to enhance creativity, information-sharing and collaboration. Emerging technologies and tools include user-created content, social networking, social e-commerce, semantic Web opportunities, crowdsourcing, personal publishing and citizen journalism. Some of the Web 2.0 applications have been very successful (Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube). Wikipedia shows how citizens can co-operate on content production and share knowledge by means of massive collaboration and crowdsourcing. An important issue related to Web 2.0 is what e-government and e-democracy can learn from social networking applications and how public authorities can tap into this new way of collaborating and sharing information.

Guideline 29. "People should be able …" and guideline 30. "Public authorities should disclose…"

146.   It is the responsibility of the public authorities to be transparent. This can be achieved by, for example, putting information about procedures and decisions online. Establishing a single public authority portal is also useful in this respect.

Guideline 31. "As e-democracy is heavily …"

147.   Once it is adopted, the Council of Europe draft convention on access to official documents will have to be implemented in such a way as to take account of the consequences of the widespread use of ICT for the way in which public authorities and users of ICT interact.

Guideline 32. " In order to create …"

148.   Member states, in co-operation with the private sector and civil society, need to promote and enhance access to ICT infrastructure, in particular by creating an enabling environment that provides an incentive for the private sector to invest in ICT infrastructure and services. Such an environment entails rules and a stable regulatory framework, the provision of, and support for, adequate training, and measures to facilitate and promote the establishment of community-based networks and foster policies and partnerships that encourage the qualitative and quantitative development of ICT infrastructure, in order to ensure universal, affordable access to the Internet. Member states also need to provide more opportunities for obtaining access to information, as a public service, and encourage co-operation among stakeholders. Moreover, they need to facilitate policies and partnerships which promote the installation of Internet access points on the premises of public authorities and, where appropriate, in other public places, and ensure that public authorities increase the provision of online services for citizens and businesses and enhance their transparency, so as to allow everyone access to public information.

Guideline 33. "E-democracy methods and tools…"

149.   E-democracy can lead to greater involvement of citizens in political life. In addition to allowing citizens to cast their votes periodically in elections, e-democracy provides an opportunity for stakeholders to express their views through participatory channels at a time and in a place convenient to them. E-government is

based on the same principle. Citizens can request services from the public authorities when they want and in the way they want, with the result that there is a government that can be reached round the clock. E-democracy has the same potential.

Guideline 34. "E-democracy games involving…"

150.   E-democracy games provide a good example of ways of informing the general public how policy making actually works. Such games therefore need to be designed in a way that the public can learn about the workings of democracy and public authorities.

Guideline 35. "While e-democracy may not…"

151.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 30.

Guideline 36. "E-democracy methods and tools…" and guideline 37. "In order to remedy …"

152.   Measures to improve transparency can include real-time information and lasting documentation. Along with other features of e-democracy mentioned in these paragraphs this can improve democratic practice and has the potential to counteract widespread apathy, disillusion with politics, a perceived lack of impact, disengagement, alienation, a lack of knowledge of politics and restrictive developments in the media.

Guideline 38. "In the context of the …"

153.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 33.

Guideline 39. "Given the various approaches …"

154.   E-democracy stakeholders need to encourage and fund research into e-democracy including, in particular, research on improving democracy through ICT, on (re-) engaging citizens in democracy and on the establishment of effective links between activities carried out by public authorities, social networking and bottom-up and top-down initiatives.

Sectors of e-democracy

Guideline 40. "E-parliament should be…"

155.   E-democracy can be of great benefit to the elected representative assembly and its members as it saves time, creates times for more and better thinking and interaction, leads to better informed members and citizens, and to better and higher legitimised political decisions and institutions. Elected representatives can use e-parliament to communicate better with one another and with their electors and the media. E-parliament can also improve transparency and accountability, for example by web casting debates online or by having votes and documentation available online. In respect of guidelines 40 to 45, see also explanatory paragraph to principle 36.

Guideline 41. "E-parliament should be devised …"

156.   Methods of e-parliament include, inter alia, posting proposals on the Internet and seeking the opinion of citizens (e-consultations), providing for the handling of and feed-back to e-petitions, promoting transparency throughout the institutional system, making it possible for citizens to exercise widespread control more effectively, that is to engage in active citizenship.

157.   ICT in e-parliament can provide new additional means to enhance the work and image of parliaments, enable and improve good governance of elected assemblies - efficiency, inclusiveness, openness and accountability -, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and provide user-centred services, increase transparency and accountability, and also encourage better communication and co-operation between all stakeholders.

Guideline 42. "E-parliament should promote the …" and guideline 43. "E-parliament should enable citizens …"

158.   E-parliament also facilitates communication with citizens. By using social networking tools, elected representatives can easily find out exactly what their stakeholders require. E-parliament also provides elected representatives with a means of informing the public of their plans and ideas. Such methods may include

member-specific software which may provide for distance participation in plenary, committee or political group meetings, distance participation in activities in the constituency and by the political party, distance voting in parliamentary votes (parliamentary e-voting) as well as for setting-up of and participating in Internet forums, blogs and social networks of a political nature. Furthermore, e-parliament provides citizens and other stakeholders with opportunities to make their voices heard and become involved in agenda-setting and decision-making. E-petitioning is a tool which can be used to assist this process.

Guideline 44. "By overcoming geographical and …"

159.   The term 'trans-border' is used in this Recommendation with the meaning of *any* trans-border character, which can be across borders between local, regional or national territorial entities and their respective representative assemblies, governments and administrative authorities. Trans-border e-parliament may be organised through inter-parliamentary information exchange systems. In most cases, translations of parliamentary documents and acts of parliament are required in order to make such systems work.

Guideline 45. "E-democracy should, by fostering…" to guideline 49. "To enable the judiciary…"

160.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 38.

Guideline 50. " In order to create …"

161.   E-petitioning and e-consultation are means whereby people can express their opinions on a particular topic. Such tools need to be considered as a reliable way of sounding out the views of the electorate. Those involved in e-petitions or e-consultations need to be properly informed of the action taken on their input.

Technology

Guideline 52. "Stakeholders should promote and…"

162.   The view is still often taken that there remains a need to develop technology appropriate to e-democracy instead of using off-the-shelf products.

Guideline 54. " In addition to the …"

163.   E-democracy can facilitate the enjoyment of human rights by giving people a voice. An example would be an opposition politician who uses the web to make his or her voice heard, by writing a blog or setting up a website: more people, both in the country and abroad, will hear these views and they will find out more about him or her.

Guideline 55. "The institution running an …"

164.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 53.

Guideline 56. " Whenever a method is ,…"

165.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 61.

Guideline 57. "E-democracy software should either …"

166.   It is essential to assess whether e-democracy systems are functioning properly and whether they are secure. If the source code is not made publicly available, independent certification of the system as a whole or of all its components is necessary. See principles 54 to 56.

Guideline 58. "Stakeholders should consider including…"

167.   Because of the above-mentioned advantages of open-source software, it needs to be considered as an alternative to proprietary software. This guideline therefore calls on all stakeholders to include an open-source software requirement in their tenders. See principles 54 to 56.

Guideline 59. "Open standards and specifications …"

168.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 56. See principles 54 to 56.

Guideline 60. " E–democracy solutions based on…"

169.   See explanatory paragraph to principles 54 to 56. On the term 'trans-border' see explanatory paragraph to guideline 44.

Introduction of e-democracy

Guideline 61. "All stakeholders should consider …"

170.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 59.

Guideline 62. "Generic e-democracy tools, based…"

171.   Guide No.1 ("*Generic tools and policies for an electronic democracy*") is intended to provide an overview of the manifold and diverse opportunities to establish e-democracy. The purpose of the guide is to assist anyone who is interested in introducing e-democracy and is looking for examples and ideas. To this end, 26 individual generic tools are described.

Guideline 64. "The introduction, development and …"

172.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 62.

Guideline 65. " A roadmap can be …"

173.   Roadmaps can be useful as a pragmatic planning method, for the purposes of inspiring and guiding e-democracy initiatives. Roadmaps for e-democracy can be particularly useful, for example, for formulating an e-democracy strategy tailored to a particular country or region, or for organising and planning the development of a comprehensive e-democracy toolkit or project.

Guideline 66. "A review and readjustment of …"

174.   E-democracy is not simply about adding ICT to existing democracy procedures. The design and introduction of new tools and procedures can provide an opportunity to review existing democratic procedures and practices and improve them. Such a review will be beneficial only if it is thorough and if a strategic plan is available.

Guideline 67. "Processes of monitoring the .…"

175.   In order to establish trust in e-democracy in general but also in specific tools, those responsible need to address the risks involved. The risk assessment must not focus only on technical risks but must include, for example, procedural risks.

Guideline 68. "In order to decide …"

176.   The checklist for the introduction of e-democracy tools is designed to assist stakeholders in their decisions regarding the development of e-democracy. Conditions for the introduction of participatory tools differ depending on the objectives of particular democratic processes, which may range from information or consultation to active participation, and according to the perspectives of those involved.

Guideline 69. "Reporting frameworks can be…"

177.   The framework for reporting e-democracy initiatives was used in the preparation of the Recommendation. Member states used this framework to report on e-democracy initiatives in their country to CAHDE. Their contributions were essential to the preparation of the document "Generic tools and policies for an electronic democracy", mentioned in guideline 62.

Guideline 70. "The same e-democracy method …"

178.   There is no universal e-democracy method. The appropriate method and tool must be carefully chosen in the light of the target public and the issue to be addressed by e-democracy. There may be cases

where e-democracy (or e-democracy alone) is not an appropriate way of ensuring meaningful participation. With reference to the wider context of democracy, see the explanatory paragraph (2nd part) to principle 72.

Guideline 71. "Before a public authority …"

179.   When an e-democracy tool is introduced to a broader public, it is essential that an independent party, appointed by the authority responsible for introducing the tool, provide an assessment of the tool. This assessment needs to be made public, and this operation needs to be carried out on a regular basis. This will facilitate trust in the tool and in e-democracy as a whole.

Guideline 72. "E-democracy methods and tools …"

180.   Any e-democracy method or tool requires evaluation, if possible by a third party. It is recommended that audits and evaluations be carried out by external parties in order to enhance transparency and trust in the tool and in e-democracy as a whole.

Guideline 73. "In order to counteract …"

181.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 64.

Guideline 74. "E-democracy should offer special …"

182.   Because e-democracy establishes non-stop democracy, it provides opportunities for stakeholders to become engaged where this might not otherwise have been possible. For example, people with physical disabilities can now, by using the Internet, voice their opinions and participate in democracy.

Guideline 75. "E-democracy should offer suitable…"

183.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 31.

Guideline 76. " Ongoing training in the skills …" and guideline 77. "As the development of …"

184.   There will always be people who require training in order to engage in e-democracy, in particular training in ICT skills. It is therefore essential that training in e-democracy and ICT skills be provided by public authorities and employers. Training in e-democracy will help to overcome e-obstacles, and therefore give more stakeholders the opportunity to voice their opinions and become involved in democracy. Politicians, public authority officials and elected representatives also need training in dealing with e-democracy, because for most of them it is an uncharted domain. An e-training programme therefore needs to be set up by public authorities especially for the purpose.

Guideline 78. "Early guidance should be…"

185.   Traditional borders are disappearing and e-democracy is therefore no longer bound by them. When designing e-democracy, it is thus necessary to take account of the disappearance of borders. The use of open-source software and open standard specifications will extend interoperability and make it easier to establish cross-border co-operation as required.

Enablers, challenges, barriers and risks

Guideline 79. "When devising and implementing …"

186.   There are many e-democracy enabling factors which need to be taken into account. It is important to realise that these enabling factors can also turn into challenges, barriers and risks to democracy in general. If, for example, there is no co-operation among the different stakeholders, the full potential of e-democracy will not be achieved.

Guideline 80. "Attention should be paid…"

187.   In order to protect stakeholders against harm from the Internet, it is important, when designing e-democracy, to address and counter the potential risks mentioned in this paragraph. One example of how to deal with discrimination is the use of a moderator in a discussion forum to make sure that inappropriate

language is not used on the Internet. Protection of these rights is the responsibility not only of the public authorities but of all stakeholders.

Rules and regulatory frameworks

Guideline 81. "The main purpose of …"

188.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 74.

Guideline 82. "The right of effective …"

189.   For the sake of their privacy and the privacy of information and personal data obtained from them, citizens must have the certainty that public authorities do not misuse information obtained from members of the public taking part in democratic processes. A legal framework could thus include a requirement that the person or institution responsible for an e-democracy method should publish legally binding privacy statements on how information can and will be used.

Guideline 83. " The advantages and disadvantages …"

190.   A regulatory framework can help secure the rights of individuals taking part in democratic processes by means of information and communication technology. At the same time, a regulatory framework can be a barrier to use. It is therefore necessary to balance the public authorities' need for authentication and control against citizens' need for privacy and security.

191.   In the case, for example, of e-voting, e-petitioning and e-consultation, the identity of the voter needs to be established and an authentication method therefore needs to be put in place. However, for the purposes of e-forums, for instance, it may not be necessary to establish the identity of the contributor. Therefore, when e-democracy is designed, an assessment needs to be made of the importance of establishing the identity of the user.

Guideline 84. " The need to disclose …"

192.   Transparency is an essential part of e-democracy. It is vital to make information available to the public, not only documents, but also information about procedures and upcoming events (for example the presence of political parties on the web). This is known as active transparency, whereas the freedom of information laws passed in many countries may be referred to as passive transparency. Privacy-sensitive information and state-security information are, however, generally protected under such legislation.

Guideline 85. "Personal data held by …"

193.   People have a right to know if personal data concerning them which are used by public authorities are correct. They therefore need access to this information by law and must be able to change incorrect data themselves or inform the authorities easily so that the data can be corrected and/or updated.

Guideline 86. "Rules, concerning the editorial …"

194.   Election campaign rules that apply to the traditional media should also apply to the digital media. It is therefore necessary to review existing legislation, taking account of the relevant Committee of Ministers recommendations to member states, so that steps can be taken to this end if necessary. Public authorities must take action if legislation needs to be adapted.

Guideline 87. " There should be safeguards …"

195.   Throughout the history of democracy there have been people who have attempted to misuse democracy. E-democracy is subject to the same risk. In addition, e-democracy presents new opportunities for misuse. A thorough review of existing rules and regulations is required to make sure that there are safeguards against the misuse of e-democracy.

Guideline 88. "Potential regulators of e-democracy …" and guideline 89. "All stakeholders should be …"

196.   Rules and regulations are not exclusively a matter for public authorities: all stakeholders need to be involved in devising them. Regulations can be introduced by means of formal legislation, but can also be

based on agreements between stakeholders or be introduced by individual stakeholders. An example of the latter situation would be a website where stakeholders could express their opinions and the participants themselves set the rules on what constituted an acceptable contribution. The situation differs from tool to tool. E-voting, for example, needs clear regulations introduced by public authorities, while rules concerning, for example, e-forums could be agreed on amongst users themselves.

Guideline 90. "Before new rules are …" and guideline 91. "Existing standards for e-government …"

197.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 77.

Guideline 92. "E-democracy rules and regulatory frameworks…"

198.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 76.

Guideline 94. "Regulatory action should be …"

199.   There is increasing discussion of governance of the Internet itself. This is directly relevant to e-democracy, since good Internet governance includes openness and accessibility, particularly in the light of, for instance, measures to block content (which infringe freedom of speech), the logging of traffic (which undermines privacy) and the requirement that users identify themselves. The Internet is increasingly important in facilitating the lives of many individuals who use and depend on public services. The Internet, as other ICT services, carries high public service value in that it serves to promote the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all who use it. Their protection is a priority with regard to the governance of the Internet.

Guideline 96. "When devising e-democracy methods …"

200.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 78.

Guideline 97. "Appropriate levels of security …"

201.   There are different levels of security. For example, e-consultation and e-petitioning need a high level of security, while e-forums do not require such a high level. When developing e-democracy, it has to be decided which level of security is needed to ensure that the tool is safe without at the same time discouraging stakeholders from participating. This process is comparable to that of establishing the level of authentication required for a tool.

Guideline 98. "Document formats, applications and …" and guideline 99. "Structured documents, with added…"

202.   See explanatory paragraph to principle 79.

Guideline 100. "Local, regional, national and …"

203.   When establishing standards, stakeholders need not try to invent standards themselves as long as standards have been drawn up by institutions such as the United Nations and the European Committee for Standardization.[10] When developing e-democracy, it is therefore first necessary to consider the standards of these institutions.

Guideline 102. " Document format and technical…"

204.   Because technology progresses so fast, an archiving challenge has arisen. Sometimes the law requires certain documents to be kept for a certain number of years. This will naturally lead to challenges in the digital sphere. How can it be ensured that electronic documents, for example legislation, will still be readable in many years' time? This aspect is therefore also important when devising e-democracy standards.

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[10] http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/homepage.htm

Appendix 1

Council of Europe texts relevant to e-democracy

Conventions

Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (ETS No. 189)
28 January 2003
conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/189.htm

Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185)
23 November 2001
conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/185.htm

Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, regarding supervisory authorities and transborder data flows (ETS No. 181)
8 November 2001
conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/181.htm

Convention on Information and Legal Co-operation concerning "Information Society Services" (ETS No. 180)
4 October 2001
conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/180.htm

Convention on the Legal Protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access (ETS 178)
24 January 2001
conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/178.htm

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocol No. 11, (ETS No. 155) 1 November 1998
http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=005&CM=8&DF=1/16/2009&CL=ENG

Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS. No. 108) 28 January 1981
conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/108.htm

Recommendations
Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)6 on measures to promote the respect for freedom of expression and information with regard to Internet filters.
Adopted 26 March 2008 at the 1022nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
https://wcd.coe.int//ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2008)6&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet
Adopted 7 November 2007 at the 1010th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1207291&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)15 on measures concerning media coverage of election campaigns
Adopted 7 November 2007 at the 1010th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1207243&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)12 on capacity building at local and regional level
Adopted 10 October 2007 at the 1006th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1194667&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)11 on promoting freedom of expression and information in the new information and communications environment
Adopted 26 September 2007 at the 1005th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1188541&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)7 on good administration
Adopted 20 June 2007 at the 999bis meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1155877&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)4 on local and regional public services
Adopted 31 January 2007 at the 985th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
https://wcd.coe.int//ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2007)4&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)3 on the remit of public service media in the information society
Adopted 31 January 2007 at the 985th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089759&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2004)15 on electronic governance ("e-governance")
Adopted 15 December 2004 at the 909th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=802805&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2004)11 on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting
Adopted 30 September 2004 at the 898th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=778189&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2003)9 on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting
Adopted 28 May 2003 at the 840th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=38043&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2002)12 on education for democratic citizenship
Adopted 16 October 2002 at the 812th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=313139&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2002)2 on access to official documents
Adopted 21 February 2002 at the 784th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=262135&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2002)1 on guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent
Adopted 30 January 2002 at the 781st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=257311&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life
Adopted 6 September 2001 at the 776th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=245255&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2001)8 on self-regulation concerning cyber content
Adopted 5 September 2001 at the 762nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=220387&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(2001)7 on measures to protect copyright and neighbouring rights and combat piracy, especially in the digital environment

Adopted 5 September 2001 at the 762nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=220727&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(99)14 on universal community service concerning new communication and information services
Adopted 9 September 1999 at the 678th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=419177&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(99)5 on the protection of privacy on the Internet
Adopted 23 February 1999 at the 660th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=407311&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(97)18 concerning the protection of personal data collected and processed for statistical purposes
Adopted 30 September 1997 at the 602nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=589341&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(89)9 on computer-related crime
Adopted 13 September 1989 at 428th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=712811&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Recommendation Rec(86)1 on the protection of personal data used for social security purposes
Adopted 23 January 1986 at the 392nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=699153&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Resolutions

Resolution ResAP(2001)3 Towards full citizenship for persons with disabilities through inclusive new technologies
Adopted 25 October 2001 at the 770th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=233261&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Resolution Res(74) 29 on the protection of the privacy of individuals vis-à-vis electronic data banks in the public sector
Adopted 20 September 1974 at the 236th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=660013&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Declarations and other texts

The role of public service media for widening individual participation European democracy (2008)
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/H-Inf(2008)012_en.pdf

Declaration (2005) 56 on human rights and the rule of law in the information society
Adopted 13 May 2005 at the 926th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=849061&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Declaration (2003) on freedom of communication on the Internet
Adopted 28 May 2003 at the 840th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=37031&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Declaration (1999) on a European policy for new information technologies

Adopted 7 May 1999 at the 104th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=448133&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Political message from the Committee of Ministers to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (Geneva, 10-12 December 2003)
Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 June 2003 at the 844th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2003)87&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=final&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75

Parliamentary Assembly

Recommendations

Recommendation 1791 (2007) State of human rights and democracy in Europe
Adopted by the Assembly on 18 April 2007 (15th sitting).
http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta07/erec1791.htm

Recommendation 1680 (2004) New concepts to evaluate the state of democratic development
Adopted by the Assembly on 8 October 2004 (32nd sitting).
http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta04/erec1680.htm

Recommendation 1629 (2003) Future of democracy: strengthening democratic institutions
Adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 25 November 2003
http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta03/erec1629.htm

Recommendation 1586 (2002) The digital divide and education
Adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, 18 November 2002
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta02/EREC1586.htm

Recommendation 1438 (2000) Threat posed to democracy by extremist parties and movements in Europe
Adopted 25 January 2000 (2nd sitting)
http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta00/erec1438.htm

Recommendation 1379 (1998) Basic education in science and technology
Adopted 25 June 1998 (23rd sitting).
http://assembly.coe.int//main.asp?link=http://assembly.coe.int/documents/adoptedtext/ta98/erec1379.htm

Recommendation 1122 (1990) Revival of the countryside by means of information technology
Adopted 2 February 1990 (29th sitting)
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta90/EREC1122.htm

Resolutions

Resolution 1547 (2007) State of human rights and democracy in Europe
Adopted by the Assembly on 18 April 2007 (15th sitting).
http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/ERES1547.htm

Resolution 1407 (2004) New concepts to evaluate the state of democratic development
Adopted by the Assembly on 8 October 2004 (32nd sitting).
http://assembly.coe.int//main.asp?link=http://assembly.coe.int/documents/adoptedtext/ta04/ERES1407.htm

Resolution 1353 (2003) Future of democracy: strengthening democratic institutions
Adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, 25 November 2003
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta03/ERES1353.htm

Resolution 1191 (1999) Information society and a digital world
Adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, 26 May 1999
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta99/ERES1191.htm

Resolution 1121 (1997) Instruments of citizen participation in representative democracy

Adopted by the Assembly 22 April 1997 (11th sitting)
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta97/ERES1121.htm

Resolution 1120 (1997) Impact of the new communication and information technologies on democracy
Adopted by the Assembly 22 April 1997 (11th sitting)
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta97/ERES1120.htm

Orders

Parliamentary Assembly Order 531 (1997) Impact of the new communication and information technologies on democracy
Adopted by the Assembly 22 April 1997 (11th sitting)
http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta97/EDIR531.htm

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Recommendations

Recommendation 249 (2008) on electronic democracy and deliberative consultation on urban projects
Adopted 29 May 2008 (3rd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=REC249(2008)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Recommendation 248 (2008)on e-tools: a response to the needs of local authorities
Adopted 29 May 2008 (3rd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=REC248(2008)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Recommendation 128 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life
Adopted 21 May 2003 (2nd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=39661&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Recommendation 54 (99) on local and regional information society.
Adopted 16 June 1999 (2nd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=847903&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Resolutions

Resolution 267 (2008) on electronic democracy and deliberative consultation on urban projects
Adopted 29 May 2008 (3rd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=RES267(2008)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Resolution 266 (2008) on e-tools: a response to the needs of local authorities
Adopted 29 May 2008 (3rd sitting)
http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1286883&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679

Resolution 76 (1999) on local and regional information society
Adopted 16 June 1999 (2nd sitting)
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