



Austrian Federal Ministry for
European and International Affairs

ICT for participatory democracy: CoE standard-setting on e-democracy

- track 1 workshop -

CoE Forum for the Future of Democracy 2008 'E-democracy'

Thomas M. Buchsbaum | Madrid, 16 October 2008



Austrian Federal Ministry for
European and International Affairs

e-democracy

**= the support and enhancement of
democracy, democratic processes and
institutions, and linked to the (re-)
engagement of citizens in democracy and
governance**

- an issue of democracy**
- other/more than e-government / e-administration**
- e-participation is *part* of it**

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“e-democracy” ?

- ***NOT another kind of democracy***
- ***NOT the latest gadget from an electronics store***
- ***NOT something of / in cyberspace, “unreal”***
- ***NOT a virtual 2nd / 3rd life***
- ***NOT changing the democratic set-up of a country***
- ***NOT an issue of technology***

Sofia IPAIT conference *rvsd.*

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the Council of Europe and e-democracy

- **The CoE started work on developing standards on e-democracy a few years ago already**
- **... was and still is a forerunner amongst intergovernmental organisations**
- **... has become the *only* international institution addressing e-democracy *in its entirety*, and**
- **... is developing overview & clarification, and standard-setting.**

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the Council of Europe: current timelines on e-democracy

- creation and mandate of 24 May 2006 to the *Ad-hoc committee on e-democracy (CAHDE)*
- public symposium on '*E-democracy: new opportunities for enhancing civic participation*', 23-24 April 2007, Strasbourg
- CAHDE expert workshops on *e-Parliament* (December 2007, Vienna), on *regulatory frameworks* (London, February 2008), and on *advice to policy making on e-democracy* (Vienna, 11 and 12 March 2008 - jointly with DEMO_NET)
- TODAY: the 2008 session, *Forum for the Future of Democracy, on 'e-democracy'*, 15 to 17 October 2008, Madrid
- a draft Recommendation on e-democracy, by end-2008, for endorsement by the Committee of Ministers

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"a text to comment upon" / 1

A draft Recommendation consisting of:

- *Recommendations to Member States* – a kind of “executive summary”
- tasks for the organisation’s secretariat
- *Principles of E-Democracy* – i.e. facts, leading to:
- *Guidelines on E-Democracy* – recommendations to different stakeholders, including on:
 - E-democracy, stakeholders, goals
 - Technology
 - Introduction and implementation of e-democracy
 - Enablers, barriers, challenges & risks
 - Rules and regulatory frameworks

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approaches

- **An INVITATION TO ANYBODY to use e-democracy – CAREFULLY;**
- **E-democracy is NOT A PANACEA to overcome all democracy deficits, but represents ADDED POSSIBILITIES;**
- **a BROAD, INCLUSIVE definition of e-democracy in respect to ALL ...**
 - **sectors of democracy** (legislature, executive, judiciary)
 - **democratic institutions** (public/private, formal/informal, etc.)
 - **levels of government** (local, regional, national, inter-/supranational)
 - **kinds of participants**
 - **areas of expertise involved**
 - **levels of binding force of participation** (campaigning to voting)

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approaches / cntd.

- **defining / describing the major e-terms;**
- **an integrated multi-stakeholder approach;**
- **a realistic approach (to benefits & challenges, use & usability);**
- **human rights-based & social cohesion-oriented**
- **politicians- and media-inclusive;**
- **sustainability- & evaluation-oriented;**
- **a comprehensive view on e-Parliament;**
- **initial thoughts on regulation (inc. security & standardisation): empowerment AND safeguards;**
- **+ annexed practical guides on the introduction, on generic examples and on the evaluation of e-democracy**

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"a text to comment upon" / 2

- **is this, what states (can) expect ?**
- **is this, what other stakeholders can expect ?**
- **is this, what stakeholders would like to get?**

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"a text to comment upon" / 3

- **is it comprehensive ?**
- **are there gaps ? – which ones ?**
- **anything superfluous ?**
- **anything wrong ?**
- **is it understandable to stakeholders?**

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PLEASE COMMENT.

Thank you.

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→ E-Democracy → Council of Europe (CAHDE)

www.coe.int/democracy

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