



(R)e-inventing Democracy *A regional approach*

Adopted by the AER Bureau on 22 June 2016 in Nordland (NO)

Whereas: Whereas: participation in elections is decreasing steadily in Europe especially in urban areas;

Whereas: governments are faced with increasingly complex challenges ranging from economic development to countering radicalisation or fighting climate change;

Whereas: Whereas: new technologies are multiplying the opportunities for the citizens participation by means of sharing opinions, advice, evaluation, financial support, co-creation and also in this context stress the importance of equal opportunities including gender equality. The existing technological gap among some parts of the population cannot be forgotten;

Whereas: new technologies must be used in respect of the citizens' privacy;

Whereas: tapping into the human capital both inside and outside institutions via IT applications could boost innovation, increase engagement, save time and financial resources;

Whereas: In a democracy the role of citizens is central and their participation is the corner stone of legitimacy;

Whereas: AER has a history of defending the recognition of the principle of subsidiarity and its implementation as well as support multi-level governance;

Whereas: AER's leading theme for 2016 is "revitalizing democracy";

We, the Assembly of European Regions:

1. commit to strengthen cooperation between all the regions of Europe to share experiences and continuously innovate in the public sector;
2. recognise the need for multi-stakeholder approaches for economic, social and political participation to face societal challenges;
3. encourage the public, private and non-governmental actors to incite citizen-led initiatives;
4. underline the importance of design in public services to provide citizens with opportunities to contribute to the public good with their talent;
5. deem education to be critical in creating a climate of innovation, openness, inclusion and entrepreneurial spirit;
6. insist on the importance of youth involvement in policy-making: youth participation should be fostered from an early age;

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7. call on all EU, national and regional stakeholders to speed up the deployment of broadband across the European territory;
8. highlight the need for e-literacy across generations and communities;
9. call on tech companies to increase their teams' diversity to enhance their innovation potential and ensure the contraction of the gender and minority gaps in technology;
10. remind that all action aimed at encouraging development of citizens' active participation in decision making and monitoring processes has to intervene in a « top-down » formulation, more effective in conjunction with the satisfaction of a « bottom-up » demand, in strict respect of the principle of subsidiarity (the best action is this which intervene in the more adequate level and/or closer to the citizen).
11. call for EU to support this development through a strong and renewed cohesion policy beyond 2020 and by the Structural and Investment Funds (ESI)
12. encourage new ICT possibilities to secure subsidiarity and multi-level governance in the EU
13. Will cooperate with the Congress in contributing to the Council of Europe Internet Governance Strategy 2016-2019: "Democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the digital world".