



## INTERNAL WORK SESSION

### Members of the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the OIDP. Lleida, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

The annual Internal Session of OIDP associate and collaborating members took place within the framework of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the OIDP, held this year in the city of Lleida, on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> April, and in Andorra on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

#### 1. Welcome

Joan Gómez, Councillor for Participation of the Lleida City Hall, opened the session as the representative of the Presidency at 9.45 a.m., offering a welcome to the city to all network members. He then thanked all those present for attending the conference and praised the efforts made by the city to receive them, before going on to highlight the processes of transformation that Lleida is currently undergoing. In continuation he went on to explain, to all those present, the origins of the city and its social and economic characteristics.

Patrick Bosch, Councillor for Citizens' and Youth Participation, also welcomed those that will be attending the work session to be held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April, in the name of the Local Government (*Comú*) of Andorra La Vella. He thanked the city of Lleida for presenting them with this opportunity, despite the lack of experience that Andorra La Vella has in the field of participation and underlined the intensity of the three years of existence of the Department of Participation of the *Comú*.

Finally, Ramon Nicolau, Councillor of the Barcelona City Council, also welcomed those present on behalf of the network's Technical Secretariat, explaining that on this occasion the Internal Session was going to be a little different, given that, as the previous one had been held only 5 months beforehand, it would make no sense to undertake an examination of the network's activities in that interlude. On the other hand, he also raised one of the points listed in the Order of Business –the renewal of the Technical Secretariat– stressing that it did not make sense for the Secretariat to be permanently held by one city and that Barcelona would give its full support to any city that wished to take on the seat for the OIDP Technical Secretariat. Having said this, he then went on to hope that everybody would have an enjoyable 11<sup>th</sup> Conference, and opened the floor for questions.

Plinio Zalewski, Director of Governance of the Secretariat of Political Coordination and Local Governance of the Prefecture of Porto Alegre, asked at what point in the Order of Business was the renewal of the Technical Secretariat to be dealt with, to which Ramon Nicolau replied that first of all they would be presenting the proposals for the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conferences and that, after these points had been covered with, they would deal with the question of the renewal of the Technical Secretariat. He then went on to explain to those in attendance that, along with the documentation of the Meeting they had also been provided with a copy of the Municipal Master Plan for Citizen's Participation of the Barcelona City Council.

Antonio Aniesa, Head of International Relations of the Nanterre City Council, referring to his city's experience in 2007, thanked the city of Lleida for their efforts with the organisation of the Conference. He then mentioned the fact that he had spoken of the renewal of the Technical Secretariat to the elected representatives of Nanterre and considered that the question should be dealt with calmly, given that the network had 2 Conferences in the offing, 10 years of experience and 500 members. He went on to argue that Participatory Democracy was not currently undergoing its best moment and, as a result, that this was a good time to initiate a balanced debate in which to reflect on the future of the OIDP. At the same time he also indicated the need to link such a reflection up with the CSIPDHR and the UCLG, in order to explore the possibility of establishing joint projects and for the networks to work together to safeguard the interests of participatory democracy in the sphere of local authorities. Finally, he



proposed that the Technical Secretariat call for written contributions, stating the commitment of the elected representatives of Nanterre to work on the question.

Plinio Zalewski seconded Antonio Aniesa in his opinion that a calm, yet in depth, discussion should take place, within the network, with regard to this matter.

As no further comments were forthcoming with regard to this matter, Ramon Nicolau brought the discussion to an end at this point with an undertaking to ensure that a joint reflection on this matter would take place among all of the network's members, via email, to be organised by the Technical Secretariat.

## **2. Presentation of the Contents of the 12<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference on "Democracy in the City and Major Urban Transformations". Porto Alegre (Brazil), 2012.**

Plinio Zalewski started by stressing the intense period of transformation that is taking place in Porto Alegre, emphasising four important moments for the city, which found expression in four City Congresses (1993, 1995, 2000 and 2003), in which different questions of interest were tackled that have allowed for the definition of a shared vision of the city. He explained that, at the present time, work was going ahead on a 5<sup>th</sup> City Congress, along with non-governmental participants (which will be held in 2014) and placing special interest in the systematic integration of the city's networks of participation.

He then continued by pointing out the strong participatory tradition of the city of Porto Alegre, which has maintained its participation spaces despite changes in local government, and that both the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> City Congress –Sustainable Development and Social Inclusion– and its organisational process will have a special effect on the proposal for the 12<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference.

He then handed the floor over to Adriana Furtado, Technician in the Secretariat of Political Coordination and Local Governance of the Prefecture of Porto Alegre, who contextualised the work that was being done in Porto Alegre, within the framework of participatory democracy, particularly with regard to the close association that has existed between Porto Alegre and the OIDP since the origins of the network and, specifically, their participation in the project for the Local Observatories of Participatory Democracy.

With regard to the proposal of the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference, she emphasised that the proposal had been drawn up jointly by the network of the city's participants and the Prefecture, furthermore stating, on behalf of the latter, their interest in leaving some kind of legacy for the city, once the event had concluded. She went on to comment on the three axes of debate, related to the central theme, clarifying that the third axis was different from the one that had originally been presented at the previous Internal Session (Mexico DF, November 2010):

1. Urban Planning and Participation
2. Participation of the Population in the Construction of "Mega-Events": Impacts and Popular Participation.
3. The Role of and Proposals by Economic Sectors in the Organisation of a City with Quality of Life and Welfare.

With regard to the methodology, she explained to those attending that the work sessions would take place on the basis of an inaugural conference, with workshops for each of the 3 thematic axes, a call for papers, as a tool to open the convocation and as a way of reaching a full range of participants beyond the academy (e.g. social movements), an audiovisual festival (held along with the "Image as a Communicative and Participatory Tool" Workgroup), and a space for the "Spatial and Territorial Segregation in Major Urban Centres" Workgroup, as well as other thematic networks related to the Conference, with the idea being to create synergies on the basis of the confluence of networks. With regard to this question, he also commented on the different "*parceiros*" (institutional partners) that Porto Alegre has managed to involve

up to now in the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference: The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, The Pontifical University of Rio Grande do Sul, The Observatory of the Metropolises, the “*Câmara de Vereadores*” (Municipal Council), and the CES of the Universidad de Coimbra, among others.

Adriana Furtado then added that, within the framework of the city itself, throughout 2011 they would be promoting reflection on, and a discussion of, the theme of the Conference, which would take place in three spaces: in the regions of the participatory process, during the city’s Film Festival, and at the 5<sup>th</sup> City Congress.

With regard to the expected level of participation, she mentioned a figure of 1,200 people, arguing that, in terms of participatory budget delegates alone, the city already had 1,000.

Finally, she referred to questions of the Time Chart, and insisted that those present must make their contributions so that a preliminary program for the event could be presented in June. Given the time limitations for dealing with this question, she invited those present to a face-to-face meeting to be held in November in Porto Alegre (taking advantage of the 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Metropolis) in order to deal with this and other questions related to the 12<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference. With regard to the date on which this meeting is to be held he left the proposal open, while mentioning the fact that Porto Alegre was considering April as the best option.

Having concluded her presentation, Adriana Furtado then opened the floor to the rest of the network members present at the Meeting for questions.

Antonio Aniesa indicated that April and May would be bad for France, because they coincided with a number of different electoral processes, which would make it difficult to convoke elected representatives for the 12<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference. He also added that it would be necessary to incorporate the perspective of peripheral towns and cities, in order to have a wider ranging approach to the central theme of the Conference. Adriana Furtado accepted this suggestion, incorporating it to the contents proposal, and invited all those present to make their contributions regarding possible speakers through the Technical Secretariat.

M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco, the Councillor for Participation of the Las Palmas City Council (Grand Canary), congratulated Porto Alegre for the interest of their proposed theme, and in particular, given recent events in the countries of the Maghreb, as well as the crisis situation and the high levels of unemployment in Spain, also praised the appropriateness of examining urban transformations from the point of view of social inclusion. On the other hand she also congratulated Porto Alegre for the work that had been done on the proposal and affirmed that there are often differences between citizens and their elected representatives in the conception of their own reality. With reference to this question she indicated the importance of including the participatory democracy/representative democracy perspective in the design of the proposal.

Nelson Dias, President of the In Loco Association, stated that examples of urban transformations were usually bad, specifically because they disguised processes of segregation and the displacement of the population. For this reason, he highlighted, as an element of improvement, that it was also necessary to be aware of the bad examples. Adriana Furtado stated her agreement with Nelson Dias, regarding the relevance of the observation. With regard to this question, Plinio Zalewski also added that it was important to bear in mind that a very interesting and important experience had occurred in the city of Belo Horizonte, in the sphere of digital inclusion, referring to the Nanterre Conference where the main theme was centred on why the population did not participate. He also informed all of those attending that they had distributed informative material regarding the proposal for both the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> City Congress.

Adriana Furtado then thanked all of those present. Ramon Nicolau thanked the representatives of Porto Alegre for their presentation, and marked June of this year as the deadline for the OIDP Coordinating Committee and the city of Porto Alegre to jointly present a definitive date for the holding of the event. The next point in the Order of the Day was then introduced.

### **3. Presentation of the Candidacy of the Carnide Parish Council (Lisbon) to host the 13<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference and to be the seat of the Presidency in 2013.**

Paulo Quaresma, President of the Carnide Parish Council (*Junta de Freguesia de Carnide*), started his intervention by stressing the fact that the institution that he represents has formed part of, and actively participated in, the activities of the network since 2007, which is why they feel absorbed by OIDP culture.

Following a brief presentation of the Carnide Parish Council, he explained that since 2004 – when the participatory budget process was initiated– the territory had changed a lot and the Parish had worked hard on involving its citizens in participation processes. This fact had enabled them, he claimed, to present this proposal today for the organisation of the 13<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference.

He then ratified the proposal for the candidacy to become the Seat of the Presidency in 2013, which was initially presented at the Internal Session in Mexico City (17<sup>th</sup> November 2010). He also ratified the commitment made by the President of the Municipal Council of Lisbon, Mr. Antonio Costa, who was in turn elected Vice-President of the UCLG last November in Mexico, to participate in the organisation of this Presidency. Along these same lines we must also stress the commitment made by the Municipal Assembly of Lisbon, along with that of other organisations at a national level, educational institutions and the popular movement. Finally, he explained that they would continue to work with these groups, placing particular emphasis on the involvement of citizens in the organisation of a Conference that would be as participative as possible.

When the floor had been opened for questions and remarks, Adriana Furtado asked whether it would be possible to clarify what the theme of the Conference was going to be. Paulo Quaresma replied that the central theme was going to be along the lines of “Best Practices of the Associative Movement, with its Potentialities and Limitations”.

M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco said that she thought that the proposal would be a very interesting one, as she considered it important to tackle the relationship between public powers and popular movements. She also stressed the need to recover civic centres through popular movements and also to give value to the role played by both markets and companies in this whole question, in order to analyse how it might be possible to integrate the different existing scenarios in a balanced manner.

Ramon Nicolau then informed the representatives of Carnide of the interest of the city of Barcelona in the theme that they were proposing for the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference. He added that, in 2002 the First Congress of the Associations of Barcelona had been held, and that at the Congress, as the main theme, they had dealt with the remodelling of the city’s participatory systems. He also informed them that a Second Congress was scheduled to be held in 2011, and that on this occasion they would be dealing with the question of financing, spaces for, and the acknowledgement of, associations, as well as the ways in which the public administration supports popular movements and the existence of the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) phenomena.

Enric Francès, Vice-President of the Barcelona Municipal Associations Council, responding to M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco, informed her that, the Second Congress would, precisely, be reflecting on the question of participation in spaces such as Civic Centres. With regard to the question of the economic management of spaces for participation by associations, he stated that a reflection on this aspect is one of the questions that needs to be dealt with in the future.



Paulo Quaresma postulated the need to talk about the question of the renewal of the associative movement and that, to this end, his proposal was to go beyond traditional associative model and consider a discussion centring on new forms of association, such as informal groups.

Antonio Aniesa emphasised the interest of the theme and raised –as was the case in Reggio Emilia with young people– the challenge of getting social movements in Carnide to involve themselves in the Conference while, at the same time, making sure that the social movements of the different network member towns and cities also did the same. He then asked the question, should towns and cities also invite those associations that are in conflict with the local authority? And concluded that, in order to overcome the challenge of tackling participation in associative spaces, this should be the case.

Roberta Pavarini, President of the Seventh Circumscription of the Commune of Reggio Emilia, also indicated her interest in the theme chosen by Carnide, and stated her agreement with Antonio Aniesa regarding the fundamental need to acknowledge errors and bring in experiences that have not been successful. Furthermore, she added, along these lines, there was a need to open up a space for reflection on the future of the network, with regard to the question of the Technical Secretariat.

Enric Francès, for his part, informed Antonio Aniesa, and all those present, that the Council that he presides is an integrated space, both for associations that have interests in common with local government and those that are detractors. He then went on to explain that, given the low level of participation in all elections, associationism must be understood as a way of improving participatory democracy. He then stated that he, on behalf of the Barcelona Associative Movement, had attended the La Paz Conference, as well as Reggio Emilia, Mexico and now Lleida, and that in order to continue with the success achieved in Reggio Emilia, in terms of youth participation, work should continue to be done along the same lines.

In conclusion, Ramon Nicolau then reminded everybody that the OIDP also represented civil society organisations and that, as a result, the Carnide proposal was perfectly in line with the OIDP parameters. Having said this, he then invited those attending to move on to the next point in the Order of Business, to ask such questions and make such comments as they considered appropriate.

#### **4. Presentation of the Candidacies for the Renewal of the OIDP Technical Secretariat, for the period 2012-2015.**

Eva García Chueca, on behalf of the UCLG, pointed out the importance of coordinating the different existing networks and, in particular, of integrating the OIDP into other already existing spaces.

Adriana Furtado opened up the possibility of organising a joint Technical Secretariat, to be shared between Europe and Latin America, adding that the city of Porto Alegre would consider this possibility, although for the time being they could not take any decisions in this respect.

Antonio Aniesa insisted in the need to examine the situation calmly and also to reflect jointly on the benefits and utilities of the networks. He thanked Barcelona for all of their efforts over the last few years at the helm of the Technical Secretariat, arguing that, due to his experiences at the helm of the FAL-P, he understood that it was far from easy to coordinate a network in a collective way. He then added that, despite the fact that at the present time there was a need to seek new paths, in his view Barcelona had overcome the challenge. Weighing up the 10 years existence of the OIDP, he went on to say that the network had allowed for work to be done on the exchange of experiences of participatory democracy. Further to this question, he added that now was the time to get elected representatives and technicians to sit down at the same table and take a joint look at where citizens' participation is and where it is heading at a global level. To see what contribution the OIDP had actually made and, with these elements, to examine in which direction we now want to take it. Finally,



he indicated that it was also necessary to sit the OIDP down with other networks, so that they could integrate their work. He added that, at the present time, a space for the strategic redefinition of the organisation had also been opened in the UCLG, and that the UCLG could be a new direction for the OIDP, given that it was the first time that the former had considered the need to set up an observatory on local democracy. He then concluded that it would be necessary to take a look at ways in which it would be possible to integrate the OIDP into this framework, insisting on how important it was to engage in an internal reflection with regard to exactly what benefits participating in an international network had brought to each of the members.

Andrés Falck, on behalf of the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity, first of all stated his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the meeting, despite the fact that the organisation that he represents is not formally a member of the OIDP. Secondly, he went on to explain to those attending that, within the framework of the World Social Forum and the Local Authorities Forum, held last February in Dakar, the Meeting of the World Participatory Budgeting Platform had taken place. He also underlined the important presence of participants from all around the world –in particular from African towns, cities and organisations- and that this Meeting had demanded the revitalisation of a space for reflection on participatory budgets at a worldwide level. He then went on to add that the next Meeting was going to take place in June, in Bogotá, and that, while they were going to be tackling internal questions such as the organisation of the Platform, they would also be discussing questions of general interest, such as a review of the Malaga Declaration. With the aim of encouraging the different international networks to work in a coordinated way he invited the OIDP to participate in the coming Meeting.

Plinio Zalewski then stressed that, rather than working to choose a new seat for the Technical Secretariat, it was becoming indispensable to find a way in which the town and city members of the OIDP could work together, between one Conference and the next. As an example he mentioned the Workgroups associated with the OLDP Project, which developed the three methodological guidelines and, in particular, the toolkit. He then commented on the possibility of creating a collaborative platform within the web, with the aim of sharing, given that experience has shown that the OIDP produced a lot of material but that this material was not being sufficiently shared. He went on to talk of the Conferences as moments in which major debates were held, but insisted on the need to reflect on the network itself and the joint work that was being done between towns and cities.

Glòria Meler, Director of the Participation and Associationism Program of the Barcelona City Council, specified that, while it was necessary to seek new paths, it must not be forgotten that, in the wake of the OLDP Project a number of Workgroups had been formed that managed to make progress due not only to the interest shown by the towns and cities that make them up but also thanks to the support shown by the Technical Secretariat. She went on to say that, aware as she was that the situation had now changed, it was necessary for as many OIDP towns and cities as possible to be involved in the debate with regard to the future of the network and the identity of the town or city that was to become the next seat of the Technical Secretariat. She then concluded by pointing out the need to engage in a higher level of debate than has existed to date within the network, so that this question could be dealt with, securing the involvement and presence of the political representatives of the towns and cities that are members of the OIDP.

In continuation Adriana Furtado proposed continuing with the discussion in November, in Porto Alegre, taking advantage of the 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Metropolis.

Ramon Nicolau, taking up the thread of the different interventions, informed those in attendance that the Technical Secretariat would continue to encourage debate with regard to this question via Internet during the coming months and would formalise the call to all members to engage in a face-to-face discussion in November, in Porto Alegre. He then introduced the next point in the order of Business.

## 5. Assessment of the 10<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference. Provision of the Documents Drafted by Mexico DF.

Ramon Nicolau then informed those present that the assessment would be made on the basis of the document drawn up by the government of the City of Mexico, which had previously been sent by mail along with the documents from the meeting. Ramon Nicolau explained the reason for the low level of international participation, alleging that the dates on which the Conference was held (November 2010) coincided with the moment when the crisis had reached its peak and, as a result, with the imposition of budgetary restrictions by many of the local administrations and organisations that form a part of the OIDP. He also added that the holding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UCLG World Conference had also had a big effect in reducing the presence of network members at the 10<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference.

This having been said he opened the floor to questions and remarks.

Paulo Quaresma mentioned that bringing the two events together had not been a positive factor in ensuring the presence of the town and city members of both networks at the 10<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference, as the holding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UCLG Congress worked in detriment to the activities of the OIDP. Furthermore, he said, that he was very disappointed by the absence of many towns, cities and elected representatives when it came to discussing the text of the Final Declaration.

Antonio Aniesa stated that, while he agreed with Paulo Quaresma he must also clarify the fact that when the OIDP decided to hold the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference in Mexico DF, the 3<sup>rd</sup> UCLG World Congress was programmed to be held in Chile. The fact that Mexico DF was later chosen as the seat of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UCLG Congress made it difficult to organise the schedules for the two events. On the other hand, he added, from his point of view, the theme of the Conference had been too general, and as a result the proposal had not managed to attract members. He went on to stress the importance of finding the right themes, to attract the attention and centre the interest of local governments. Finally he reflected that it was up to the town or city that was hosting the Conference to mobilise its forces and ensure a high level of local participation.

M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco then pointed out that, in order to work on participation, resources were needed (human, technical, publicity, economic, etc.) and that the OIDP should be a vehicle, for the towns and cities that organised these events, allowing them to reach a public that otherwise they would not be able to reach, and that it was already an important instrument of support and reinforcement for projects that were already underway.

With this last intervention, Ramon Nicolau formally brought the Internal Session to a close at 12.35 hours, which was then followed by the Reception hosted by the Mayor of Lleida, in the Palacio de la Paeria, as the Lleida City Council had arranged, in order to welcome the members of the network.

## 6. Attended by:

### 30 Persons, 23 of whom were Members.

- Joan Gómez. Councillor for Participation and Citizenship of the Lleida City Council.
- Patrick Bosch. Councillor for Citizens and Youth Participation, of the Local Government of Andorra La Vella.
- Ramon Nicolau. Councillor of Barcelona City Council.
- Glòria Meler. Director of the Participation and Associationism Program of the Barcelona City Council.
- Àngel Aragüés. Secretary of the Barcelona Municipal Council of Associations, Barcelona City Council.
- Enric Francès. Vice-President of the Barcelona Municipal Council of Associations.
- Alfons Molons. First Deputy Mayor of the Arenys de Munt Town Council.





- Josep Pons. Head of Participative Action, Lleida City Council.
- M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Blanco Roca. Councillor for Participation of the Las Palmas City Council (Grand Canary).
- Marcos Infante. Participation Technician of the Las Palmas City Council (Grand Canary).
- Christian Vergalli. Councillor of the Seventh Circumscription of the Commune of Reggio Emilia.
- Roberta Pavarini. President of the Seventh Circumscription of the Commune of Reggio Emilia.
- Abelardo Pérez. European Representative of Pro Participatory Democracy Cultural Initiative, Inc (PDCI).
- Guida Obrador. Technician of the Office of Citizens' Participation of the deputation of Barcelona.
- Nelson Dias. President of the In-Loce Association.
- Paulo Quaresma. President of the Carnide Parish Council.
- João Oliveira. Participative Management and Cultural Coordinator of the Carnide Parish Council.
- Antonio Aniesa. Head of International Relations for the Nanterre City Council.
- Joan Font. European Projects Coordinator for DEMA (Department of Current Media Studies).
- Lúdia Lluís. Councillor for Citizenry of the Pineda de Mar Town Council.
- Xavi Rodríguez. Technician in the Area of Citizenry, of the Pineda de Mar Town Council.
- Eva García Chueca. Technical Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission of Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of the UCLG.
- Rosma Fernández. Director of the Participation Area of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces.
- Anastasio Castizo. Head of the Participation Service of the Seville City Council.
- Plinio Zalewski. Director of Governance of the Secretariat of Political Coordination and Local Governance of the Prefecture of Porto Alegre.
- Adriana Furtado. Technician in the Secretariat of Political Coordination and Local Governance of the Prefecture of Porto Alegre.
- Cristóbal González. Head of the Citizens' Participation Service of the Santa Coloma de Gramenet Town Council.
- Tatiana Mansilla. Participation Technical Manager, for the Castelldefels Town Council.
- Silvana Veloso. Director of Digital Inclusion for Prodabel, the IT and Information Society company of the Prefecture of Belo Horizonte.
- Andrés Falck. Representative of the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity.
- Laia Vilademunt. OIDP Technical Secretariat.

