



# ***The Council of Europe and e-democracy***

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“Good Governance in the Information Society”***

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# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## ➤ Origins and membership

- The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest political organisation, founded in 1949. Headquarters in Strasbourg
- 47 member states, more than 800 million Europeans
- has granted observer status to 5 countries:  
Canada, Japan, Mexico, the United States and the Holy See
- is distinct from the 27-nation European Union, but no country has ever joined the EU without first belonging to the Council of Europe



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# The Council of Europe

## Core business

Develop, maintain and protect

- human rights
- pluralist democracy
- the rule of law



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## Council of Europe Summit (May 2005), Action Plan:

*“We will also take initiatives so that our member states make use of the opportunities provided by the information society. In this connection the Council of Europe will examine how ICT can facilitate democratic reform and practice”.*



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# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

- **Recommendation (2004) 11 on legal, operational and technical standards for e-voting**  
*(September 2004)*
- **Recommendation (2004) 15 on e-governance**  
*(December 2004)*
- **Recommendation (2009) 1 on e-democracy**  
*(February 2009)*



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# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

## Recommendation (2009) 1 on e-democracy

*(prepared by CAHDE,*

*adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 February 2009)*

- provides European governments and other stakeholders with a comprehensive set of principles and guidelines concerning e-democracy;
- is accompanied by several practical tools (e.g. A Set of generic tools; Roadmap and checklist for the introduction of e-democracy and specific tools; Evaluating e-democracy; Glossary of technical terms).



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# Principles and guidelines for e-democracy

- General concepts and considerations
- Sectors of e-democracy
- Technology
- Introduction of e-democracy
- Enablers, challenges, barriers and risks
- Rules and regulatory frameworks



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# E-DEMOCRACY

**as a complementary channel of democratic participation :**

- **contributes to the transparency, accountability and responsiveness of democratic institutions;**
- **facilitates democratic engagement and deliberation;**
- **increases the accessibility and inclusiveness of the democratic process.**



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# Advantages

- **complementary to the traditional democratic process – it is not a new form of democracy;**
- **opens possibilities of civic participation in all stages of the democratic processes;**
- **offers opportunities to reinvigorate representative democracy and to review its traditional concepts;**
- **helps to re-attract citizens' declining interest in politics;**
- **creates new possibilities for civic initiatives.**



# Challenges to e-democracy

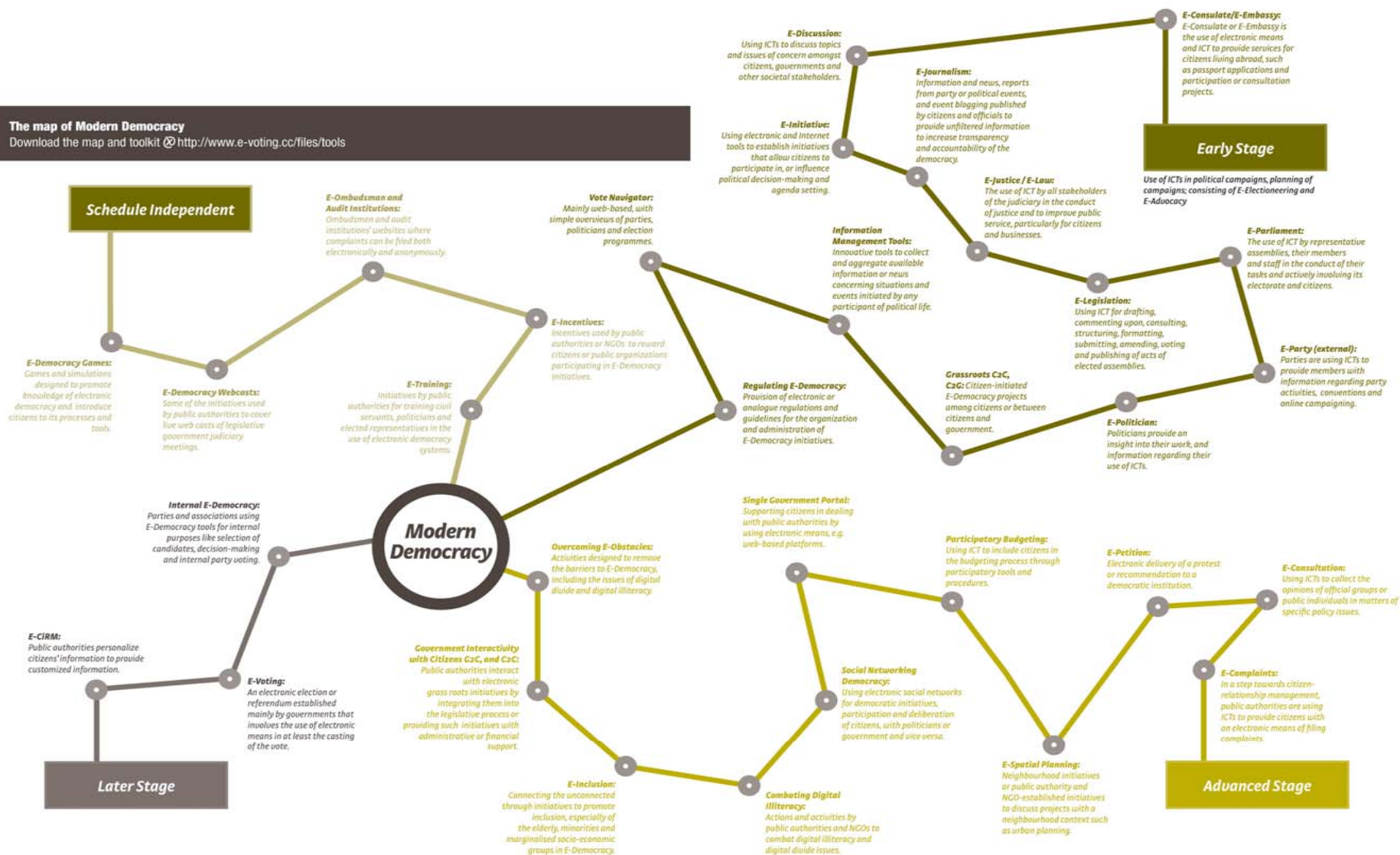
## E-democracy stakeholders need to:

- **facilitate accessibility, use and inclusion;**
- **guarantee that the contributions of individuals are taken into consideration in decision-making processes;**
- **involve all interested parties to avoid the risks of social divide;**
- **encourage public authorities to support civic initiatives;**
- **pay attention to risks linked to the presentation of fallacious information** (defamation, discrimination, diffusion of pornographic material, etc.).



## The map of Modern Democracy

Download the map and toolkit @ <http://www.e-voting.cc/files/tools>



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# Possible future work (I)

- Promoting the application of the Recommendation and indicative guides
- Translating the Recommendation to various languages
- Using the Recommendation as a basis for customised checklists, codes of practice, etc.
- Exploring the need for rules and regulatory frameworks



# Possible future work (II)

- Understanding the implications of e-democracy on democratic processes
- Seeking ways to support and harness bottom-up e-democracy
- Collecting good practice on and evaluating e-consultation
- Organising biennial meetings for reviewing developments in e-democracy and the application of the Recommendation



# Recommendation Rec(2004)11 on e-voting

## ➤ Objectives:

- apply the principles of democratic elections to e-voting
- provide member states with a comprehensive checklist for all stages of the electoral process
- set minimum standards for remote and non-remote e-voting
- promote and ensure the interoperability of e-voting systems



Thank you for  
your attention !

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➤ Backup slides



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# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

- **“Electronic tools: a response to the needs of local authorities” Recommendation 248 (2008)**
- **“Electronic democracy and deliberative consultation on urban projects ” Recommendation 249 (2008)**

**The Congress recommends to:**

- **develop and improve the implementation of e-democracy tools ;**
- **make sure to provide transparent, high-quality, accessible, intelligible and accurate online information so that the public is encouraged to take an interest in local public action ;**
- **reinforce the legislative and regulatory framework for consultation, making it compulsory for all tiers of governance to involve the public in projects that affect them, in particular in terms of sustainable urban planning, spatial development and local infrastructure facilities ;**
- **develop ICT infrastructure throughout national territories, in accordance with the principles of equality and continuity, with a view to increasing the attractiveness of the various regions and reducing the digital divide.**



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# Recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly on e-democracy (Rec 1860, *Jan. 2009*)

**The Assembly calls on national parliaments and authorities at all levels to make a full use of ICT opportunities with a view to improving the quality of representative democracy and, in particular to:**

- **review national legislation with a view to introducing legal standards for using e-tools in the political process, and to eliminate the risks of their misuse;**
- **provide citizens with the possibility of following the work of parliament and its members, allowing for maximum transparency;**
- **elaborate and establish good practices as regards the active participation of citizens in the political process, including e-consultation.**

