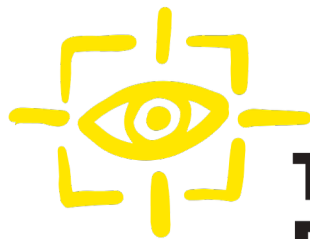


PROGRAM



**The Guardians of
Democracy**

CONFERENCE

25 - 27. SEPTEMBER, 2024.

**THE GUARDIANS
OF DEMOCRACY
CONFERENCE**

Hotel Benczúr
1068 Budapest,
Benczúr utca 35.





The Guardians of Democracy

CONFERENCE

25. 09. 2024.

14:00 - 15:30

INTRODUCING THE LDH

Péter Szabados - Hungary

The establishment of the Local Democratic Hub in Central Europe is an initiative to connect civil society with local government politicians around important issues. It will provide NGOs with the resources and network of contacts to advocate their issues more effectively while involving active local politicians and developing their social relationships and base. The network-based platforms of NGO professionals and elected officials will strengthen their power and organizing capabilities. It will prepare both sides for more conscious cooperation in the struggle for the survival of the democratic framework. It strengthens the foundations of democracy, supports grassroots initiatives, strengthens participatory democracy, and promotes representation on important issues such as the protection of minorities, the fight against climate crisis, or the solution of housing problems.

LDH IN HUNGARY

Péter Szabados - Hungary

As a result of the programme in Hungary, common thinking has begun on 8 different issues in 6 municipalities, such as the renewal of the municipal tendering system through the use of participation tools, community planning projects, the reduction of air and noise pollution from Industrial parks, and the reform of local social ordinance. During the local government election campaign, we helped to maximise participation and maintain the integrity of the elections. Later, we expanded the range of participants and today we are present in 11-12 settlements with the programme, helping our civic partners to work together with the local governments.

THE GUARDIANANCE OF DEMOCRACY



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Maros Chmelik, CKO - Slovakia

LDH IN SLOVAKIA

The programme in Slovakia focuses on strengthening local initiatives in their struggle for a democratic society, building broad-based groups of people with different backgrounds, such as NGOs, local government, business, university, churches and others.

After the initial support of two test cities - Zvolen and Banská Bystrica, the programme is gradually expanding to other cities across the region and beyond. Through the tool of community organizing, we are trying to create a base for long-term functioning, following the example of our CKO platform Not in Our Town, which has been actively fighting extremism and radicalization in the region since 2013.

We are currently working with 5 initiatives in the Banská Bystrica region and supporting 3 more outside the region, with a total of more than 120 active people involved in our programme.

Dagmara Kubik - Poland

LDH IN POLAND

The Common Thing Foundation focuses on supporting local groups fighting for their rights and helping them make their voices heard. The program is centered on activating residents of the Silesian Region and equipping them with tools to address social issues and organize civic activism, thereby building a foundation of interpersonal trust and resilience against politically motivated polarization and misinformation, particularly around climate issues. Engaged citizens are becoming a crucial element in building a democratic, active society—demonstrating politics made by the people.

15:45 - 17:15

Pál Susánszky - Hungary

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

What tools do citizen organizations have to monitor democratic processes in the region?

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26. 09. 2024.

9:30 - 12:45

HOW TO MAKE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY? COLLECTING INFORMATION

Melinda Várfi - Hungary

Introducing citizens' assembly

LOCAL ISSUES AND CIVIC PLATFORMS

FTP - Poland

Using a community organizing approach, the Common Thing Foundation, in collaboration with activist groups from various cities, launched the "Silesian Blossoming" campaign. This coalition of more than 30 groups brings together people interested in improving the quality of life in the Silesian agglomeration.

SOCIAL CONTRACT - A TOOL FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN ALBANIA

Esmeralda Hoxha, GADC-Albania

POP Network "Juxtaposing Political Offers" (Përballja e Ofertave Politike) aims to increase public debate and information among citizens, as well as orienting platforms towards the needs and priorities of citizens. Through its activities, the network aims to strengthen Albanian democracy, promoting transparency and accountability. POP is an initiative of the network of Albanian civil society organizations.

BUILDING CIVIL PLATFORMS

Maros Chmelik, CKO - Slovakia

The current situation in Slovakia in terms of the defence of democracy and civil society is alarming. Grants are being cancelled, NGO watchdog organisations are being attacked in the media, pressure is being put on individual civil society actors and a law on foreign agents is being drafted.

When democracy is failing at the national level, we need to look to the local level, where relationships and trust are easier to build.

CKO's presentation will therefore be about how, through the example of the Local Democracy Hub project, we are gradually building initiatives of courageous people across the country to create communities that advocate for democracy and its values.



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Gresa Berisha, Dardan Kryeziu
CiviKos - Kosovo

ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Enhancing Local Governance: The Role of Civil Society in Decision Making processes at local level.

This presentation will explore the vital role that civil society and citizens play in shaping budgetary planning at the local level in Kosovo. Drawing on the experiences and practices of CiviKos, we will focus on how local councils, supported by civil society organizations, actively participate in budgetary hearings and planning processes.

14:00 - 15:30

Melinda Várfi - Hungary

HOW TO MAKE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY? CO-CREATION OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/IDEAS

There are many different ways of making decisions or just asking for advice on a community level. In participatory democracy one of the most often used such deliberative tool is citizens' assembly. Of course the time limitation does not allow to experience such a full process in reality, but with hearing in the morning the case studies and learning from and with the experts we are ensuring by the knowledge transfer part is taking place and in the afternoon we are modelling the cocreative brainstorming together with all the participants.

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THE ROLE OF CIVILIANS
IN LOCAL ELECTIONS

15:45 - 17:15

VALUE-LED CAMPAIGNING IN HUNGARY AROUND ELECTIONS

Enikő Tóth, aHang - Hungary

In relation to the previous local and European Parliament elections in Hungary, aHang worked on three different levels to urge social change: promoting expression of opinion and dialogue, increasing voter turnout, and engaging active citizens to vote tripling. Enikő Tóth (campaign director, aHang) presents the tools and tactics used by aHang in the lead up to the elections and their impacts.

ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM AND POLITICAL ACTION AS IT AFFECTS ELECTIONS

Gorana Jovanovic, Marina Pavlič,
Kreni Promeni - Serbia

We will present how the mix of online and offline community organizing affects political action. How we hold the decision-makers accountable through activism and campaigns and we are in direct contact, how one movement participated in the elections in 4 cities and 4 municipalities and won mandates in all of them. We will also share the before and after campaigns and what the difference in approach is.

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MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY

9:30 - 10:15

Julijana Mladenovska, Resis -
North-Macedonia

**COMMUNITY MEDIA
PLATFORMS AS
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION
IN THE DEMOCRATIC
PROCESSES**

Community media platforms are essential catalysts for enhancing citizens' participation in democratic processes. By amplifying diverse voices, addressing local issues, and fostering dialogue among community members, these platforms empower individuals to actively engage in shaping public opinion and policy.

10:15 - 11:15

Kata Sándor - Hungary

**CREATING LOCAL PUBLICITY
- ONLINE MEDIA**

Roundtable discussion with Hungarian online media platforms:
Debreciner, Polgár Tóth Tamás
EgriSzín, Kácsor Zsolt
Borsod24, Bethlen Tamás

11:30 - 13:00

Evaluation and take aways

THE GUARDIANANCE OF DEMOCRACY



The Guardians of Democracy

CONFERENCE

Local communities are the foundation of democracy!

Across Europe, our goal is for civil society organizations and citizens to be actively involved in local decision-making, while local government actors treat them as partners, recognising the potential of cooperation and the power of working together. We believe deeply in the Guardians of Democracy!

In those civil citizens who know that active participation in common affairs not only shapes the community but also strengthens it.

Link for translation:

