

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### 25th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy in Kraków 2026

- Kraków (Poland), 21-23 September 2026 -

*Hope and Renewal in The Face of a Global Crisis of Democracy.  
The Future of Participatory Democracy from Local to International Governance*

#### About the Conference

The 25th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (OIDP) is organized by the [Municipality of Kraków](#) (Poland) and the [World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments](#) (UCLG). It will bring together political leaders, officials, academics, and activists who will reflect and discuss the challenges facing the future of participatory democracy from local, national, regional and international perspectives.

The conference will culminate with the adoption of a Political Declaration, capturing the key messages and shared commitments emerging from the discussions. The event will also host the OIDP Award Ceremony for “Best Practice in Citizen Participation”, celebrating innovative and inspiring participatory experiences from around the world. Beyond its formal outputs, the conference aims to reinforce alliances and partnerships among local governments, academia, civil society, and international organizations, while encouraging concrete collaborative initiatives that advance participatory democracy globally.

Please kindly note that the conference will be held in person in Kraków. No participation fee will be charged. Participants bear their own travel, accommodation and other expenses. The conference's working languages will be English, Polish, Spanish, and French. Translation will be provided during the sessions.

## Conference's Themes

The 25th Anniversary edition of the OIDP Conference will focus on observing and analysing participatory democracy. Based on the rich experience of twenty-four conferences, this time, we are planning to look ahead and reflect on the role of participatory democracy in the modern world, hence this confronts us with great challenges that a democratic society must face. Current global crises such as wars, migration, climate change, and radical social polarization are resulting in declining trust in democracy. Moreover, nowadays technological and informational dangers bring us to live in a post-truth era, where public disinformation and social polarization foster populist tendencies. The solution of the aforementioned problems should be fully committed participatory democracy. We believe that the future of democracy itself depends on citizen engagement. However, there is no single solution, nor have we forged a clear path. Indeed, true participatory democracy which solves society's daily problems, forms at the local level - as it develops, it moves toward transnational solutions. All in all, reflecting on the future of participatory democracy must therefore connect the local and transnational dimensions of participation.

## How to participate?

We invite conference participants to explore the central theme of the conference and give presentations related to one of the following thematic pathways:

- Citizen Participation in Times of Crisis – Building Trust, Inclusion, and Civic Engagement
- Deeper Democracy - The Impact of Institutionalizing Deliberation on Representative Democracy
- Citizen Participation in the Context of Transformation and Building Democratic Structures
- Local Governments in the Spotlight of Citizen Participation

You can find detailed overviews of the thematic pathways in the Concept Note available on the 25<sup>th</sup> OIDP Conference website: [Concept Note - OIDP 2026](#)

We expect both traditional thematic panels featuring discussions and moderation, and innovative knowledge sharing, as well as workshops and interactive sessions that leverage new technologies. Panels that are inclusive and integrative of attendees and that involve active audience participation, such as workshops, simulations, or world cafes, will be welcome. We want to place significant emphasis on presenting good practices not just through theoretical discussions, but also by sharing practical experiences, notably by simulations of good participatory methods.

An important principle will be to ensure a balance between the genders, nationalities and regions represented by the speakers.

After having consulted the Concept Note please submit your application using one of the links below depending on the chosen format of your contribution:

- **Individual presentations**  
*Individual presentations will be included in one of the panels and should generally last up to 15 minutes.*
- **Fully-formed panels**  
*Please note that a fully-formed panel must include a chair, and at least three (3) and at most five (5) participants who have already agreed to take part. Participants may be presenters or discussants, but the panel must include at least three (3) presentations. One of the discussants or presenters may serve as chair.*
- **Workshop or project showcase**  
*Such a session is pre-arranged and facilitated by one or more people. Its objective is to provide a practical demonstration of participatory or deliberative tools and to actively engage other conference participants in experimenting with them. The exact role of each participant depends on the concept of the presentation, and we encourage you to define and assign them in a way that you consider best for presenting your ideas and work.*

## Timeline

Proposal submissions are due by **30 April 2026, until 11:59 p.m. (CEST)** Proposals will be reviewed without undue delay and the Conference Scientific Committee will notify you of the acceptance or rejection of your submission by the end of May 2026.

## Scientific Committee of the OIDP Conference Kraków 2026

The Scientific Committee was appointed by the Mayor of Krakow as a team of scholars, experts, and practitioners in the field of citizen participation. The Scientific Committee is responsible for preparing the conference concept and reviewing the submitted presentation proposals. The list of committee members can be found in the [Ordinance of the Mayor of the City of Kraków No. 2931/2025](#) of 5 December 2025.