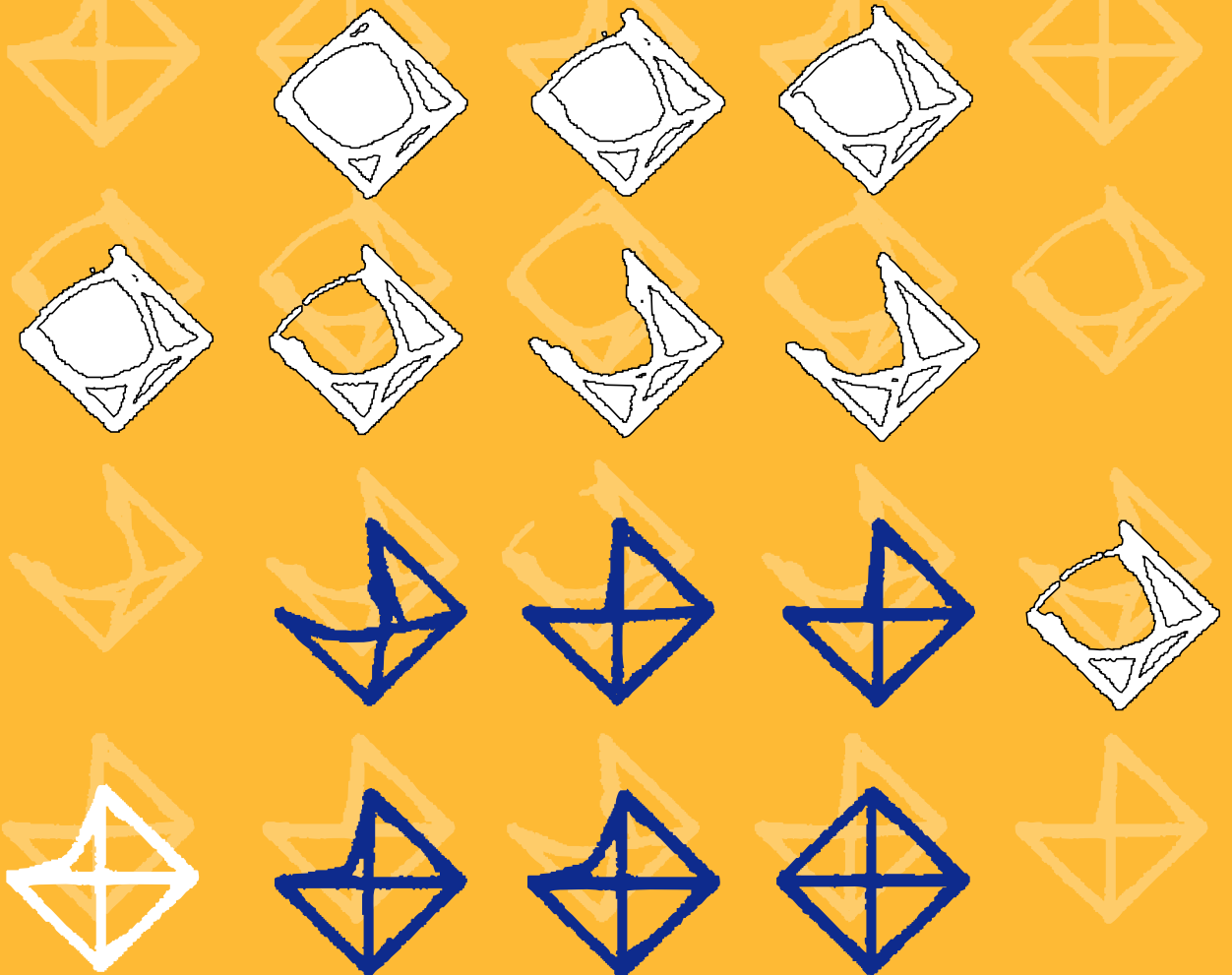




**"Participation of civil society
in the decision-making process
at the local level.
A common added value
for local authorities in Europe"**

**Conference organised
by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies
and the City of Barcelona**

1 - 2 July 2004



with the support of



DG Education and Culture



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Introduction and Acknowledgements	4
The work of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies	4
Results of the survey on the participation of civil society in the decision-making process	5
Introduction	5
Main questions	6
Selection of the best case studies of how to include civil society in the decision-making process at the local level	12
Conference on 1 July 2004	15
Welcome Adresses	15
Teresa Sera, Representative of the Ayuntamiento of Barcelona	15
Giovanni di Stasi, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	15
1st session: “The participation of civil society in the decision-making process: a common European Value”	15
Introduction: Antonella Valmorbida, ALDA Director	15
Elisabeth Gateau, Secretary General - United Cities and Local Government (Barcelona)	16
Jaume Saura, Director of the Institute of Human Rights in Catalonia	16
Geza Kucera, Mayor of Subotica (Serbia-Montenegro)	16
Wiggo Lauritzen, Chief Municipal Executive, City of Fauske (Norway)	16
Marcin Konieczny, Foundation in support of Local Democracy Training Center in Olsztyn (Poland)	17
Lo Bianco Luca, Director of the Department of Economic and Politics - Municipality of Rome	17
Ezio Beltrame, Member of the Government of Region Friuli-Venezia-Giula (Italy)	17
Jean-Daniel Biéler, Director of the First Table of the Stability Pact	17
2nd session: Case studies on the participation of citizens in the decision-making process	18
Selvedina Ulyic, Mayor of Zavidovici (Bosnia-Herzegovina)	18
Jean-Louis Testud, Deputy Mayor of Suresnes (France)	18
Annalisa Tomasi, “Association Project Prijedor” (Italy)	18
2 July 2004	18
3rd session: report of the working groups to the plenary session	
Presentation of the English-speaking working group: Tanja Puskaric, LDA Sisak Delegate	18
Presentation of the Italian-speaking working group: Patrizia Bugna, LDA Prijedor Delegate	19
Presentation of the French-speaking working group: Stève Duchene, LDA Kosovo Delegate	20
Presentation of the contribution of civil society in the cities’ decision-making process: fighting against corruption in the cities.	21
Mr. Ronald MacLean-Abaroa, former Mayor of La Paz (Bolivia), World Bank Institute, Washington	
Conclusion	22
Contact details	23

Around 90 participants from all over Europe, representatives of different local authorities, NGOs and international organisations, gathered at the beginning of July 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. The aim of this conference was to discuss the inclusion of civil society in the decision-making process at the local level and to question whether it is a common and shared European value. As a basis of discussion served a survey among European local authorities and civil society organisations conducted by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies in the months prior to the event. The inquiry gives some tendencies as to the participation of citizens in the decision-making process in today's Europe. It also brings together a collection of interesting case studies and "best practices" which were used for the debates during the working groups of the conference.

The mission of the Local Democracy Agencies and its Association which have been active in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" since 1993 was from the beginning to foster active citizens' participation in the decision-making process at the local level and therefore hope that this booklet will stimulate further discussions of the topic among different European actors involved in decision-making.

We would like to thank the City of Barcelona for its generous support which made the realisation of this conference possible. Furthermore, we are very grateful for the financial and political support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and we would like to express our appreciation to the European Commission for providing us with a fund within their DG Culture.

Gianfranco Martini
President ALDA



The participants of the conference

Our Past

When the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) was established in 1999, it brought together a network of Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) in existence since 1993. The LDAs were set up by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Congress); they were originally conceived to provide concrete assistance to war-ravaged municipalities in the former Yugoslavia through partnerships with counterparts in Western Europe. As the war in the



ALDA's 11 Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) cover all of the former Yugoslavia

Balkans ended, ALDA's focus shifted from crisis management to democratic reform, with an emphasis on promoting tolerant and trust-based relationships within communities. From the beginning, however, ALDA's method has been to partner with community experts and municipal representatives to use local efforts to meet local needs.

Our Present

In the decade since its founding, ALDA has grown from a small pilot programme to one of the most important local actors in promoting a stable, democratic South Eastern Europe. As the network co-ordinator, ALDA facilitates collaborations among 11 Local Democracy Agencies and over 100 members and 200 partners, towns, regions and NGOs across the whole of Europe. LDAs, which have extensive autonomy to respond to local needs, support community-based institutions with training and other information services, promote intercultural dialogue, and foster the development of inclusive civil society. Other projects include economic revitalisation, refugees, education, the environment, youth/culture, and media, among others. Further, ALDA's network facilitates other organisations' programmes by providing quick access to contacts for discussion and action. In addition to coordinating LDAs' activities, ALDA contributes to fundraising, provides LDAs with technical and administrative support, trains staff, maintains an information and publication centre, and represents members in dealing with international institutions and sponsors-especially the Council of Europe. Through a formal working agreement with the Council, LDAs share their expertise in implementing programmes, gathering and disseminating information locally, and organising site visits. Other

Results of the survey on the participation of civil society in the decision-making process

The survey was prepared by Stefania Toriello, project-manager decentralised co-operation ALDA and Antonella Valmorbida, Director ALDA.

international organisations ALDA works closely with include the National Association of Local Authorities Authorities in South Eastern Europe (NALAs), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, and the United

Nations-particularly the High Commissioner for Refugees. Despite its high level of international involvement, ALDA remains committed to its original mandate to focus on supporting democracy on a local level.

As its programmes continue to find success in the Balkans, ALDA looks to draw on its accumulated expertise in playing an important advisory role to the EU enlargement process. While its experience in the former Yugoslavia makes it an ideal partner for enlargement activities in South East Europe, ALDA's expertise is needed by other regions as well. To meet that need, ALDA has begun its preparation to open a new Local Democracy Agency in Kutaisi, Georgia in summer 2005 and to implement a pilot project in Belarus. Indeed, the future strategy of ALDA is to support the stabilisation and accession process all over Europe.

In the meantime, ALDA re-cognizes the important effects that neighbouring countries' accession to the EU will have on the whole of South East Europe and looks forward to partnering with organisations across the continent to ensure a smooth, stable transition that benefits all countries in the region. Having already joined the Council of Europe, the Balkan states are expected to join the EU themselves in coming years, and

ALDA will be there to support them. As the Balkans become increasingly involved in continent-wide networks, ALDA is growing to promote tolerant and effective local governance across Europe.

The EU Mayors Project

As part of that European future, ALDA started a year-long EU Mayors project sponsored by the EU Information Programme Prince, to raise municipal authorities' and community leaders' awareness of the opportunities that EU enlargement presents to them. The project which consisted of best practice exchanges finished off with a major international conference in December 2004. ALDA published a CD-rom on best local governance practice which summarises the debates and exchanges of the EU Mayors Project. For 2005, ALDA is planning to develop a follow-up project which will include the new EU candidate countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Croatia.

The participants were asked a series of multiple-choice questions.

We received

12 questionnaires from the local authorities

22 questionnaires from NGOs

= 34 questionnaires

For local authorities:

6 Municipalities

1 Province

2 Associations of local authorities

1 Region

2 Other

(10 of them are members of ALDA)

Local authorities that responded came from the following countries : Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, France, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, United Kingdom

For NGOs:

The NGOs that responded were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the United Kingdom,

"the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Italy, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro

(5 of them are members of ALDA)

Introduction

The present inquiry was circulated among all the members of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (at present 92 members) and among the whole network of the Local Democracy Agencies (around 190 actors). It was also sent to the Local Democracy Agencies in South East Europe that circulated the inquiry.

The questions and methodology were inspired by our experience in supporting the participation of civil society in the decision-making process at the local level, through the activity in the field of the Local Democracy Agencies. Local Authorities and NGOs were the two target groups of the inquiry. Their approach to the issues and problems and various roles in local governance bring a unique perspective to our understanding of these processes.

The target group of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies and the cases presented - because of the membership and activities of ALDA - does not only present a vision of today's Europe. This includes South East Europe as part of Europe (where the LDAs are currently working). We consider that approach an additional interesting impetus to the discussion for a deep understanding of the values shared by all those who describe themselves as "Europeans". Our objectives are then to go further in the understanding of European identity and not only its formal, technical boundaries.

A few notes for a better understanding of the graphics:

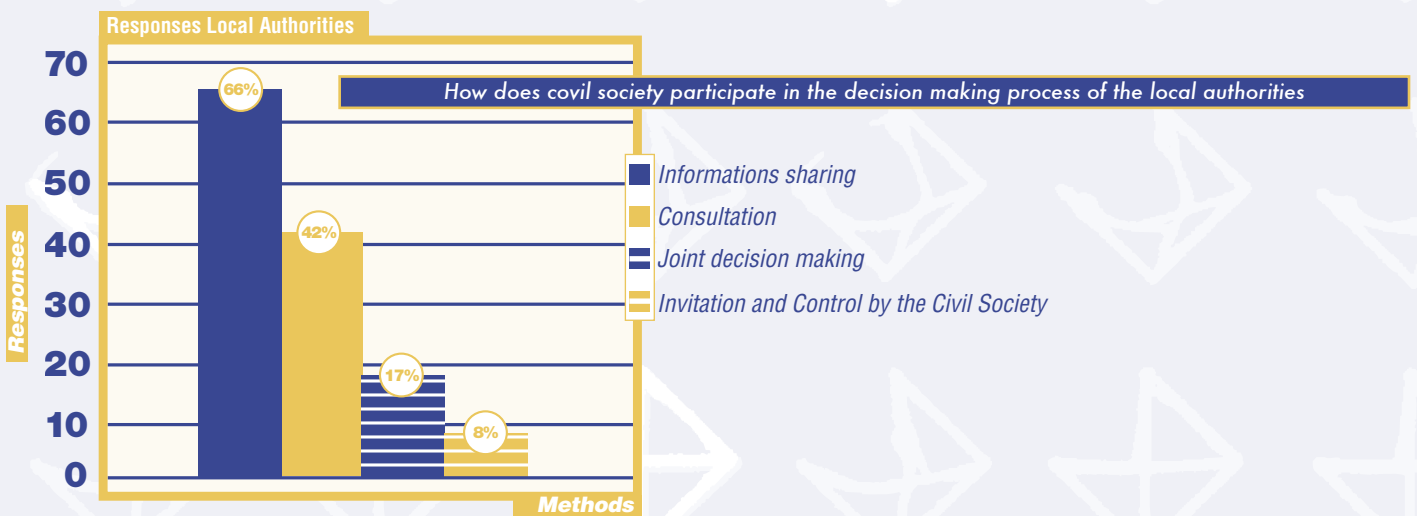
The responses are presented in percentages. Most of the questions were multiple choice. The Y axis were the 100 % of the answer available and here are presented the percentage of answers given for each X.

For question 2 (how the local authorities involve civil society), we chose few presentations by country for publication. We presented only those who gave sufficient answers to be considered relevant.

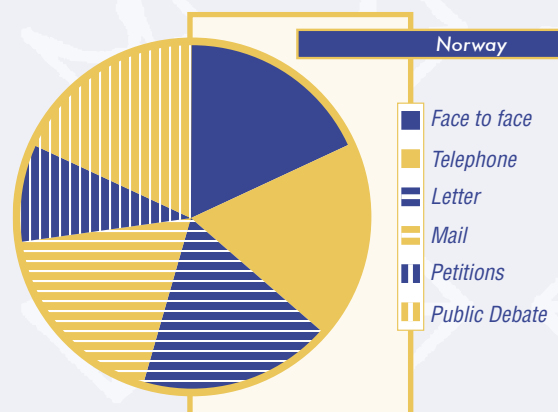
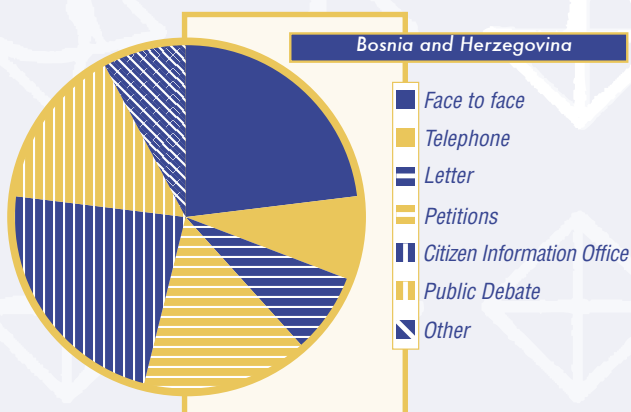
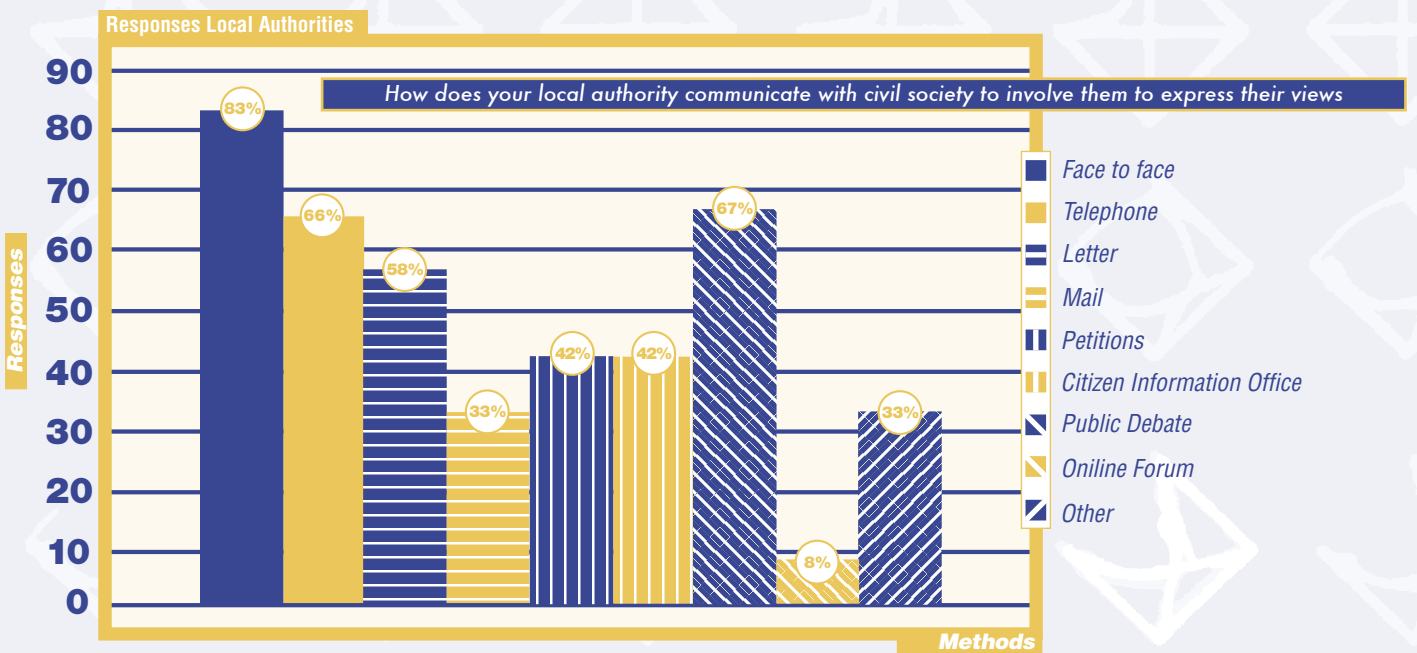
The question "In which of these areas is the participation of civil society more encouraged by your local authority?" is here presented by range and not by percentage.

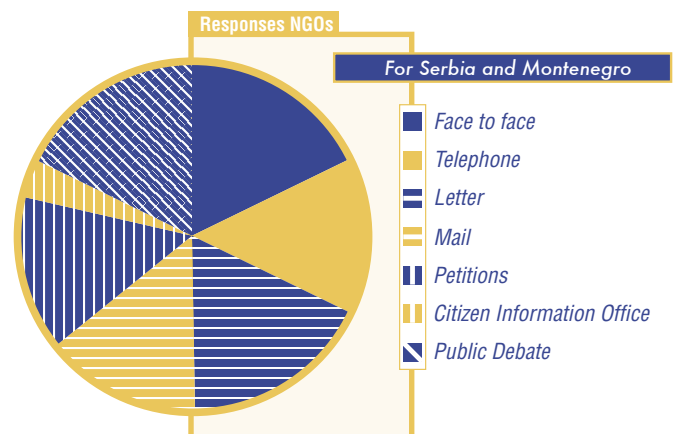
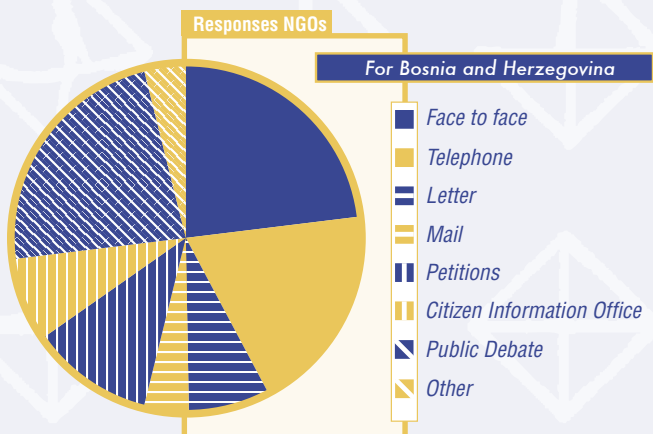
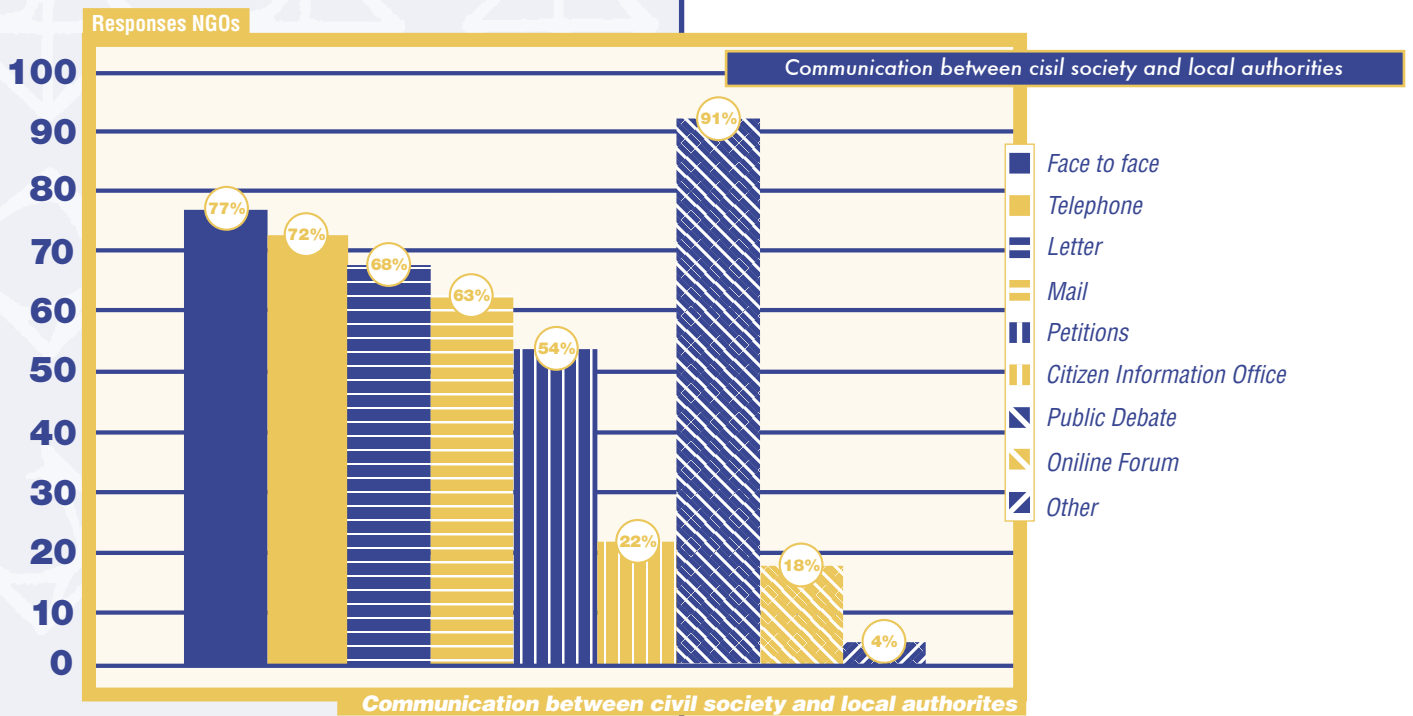
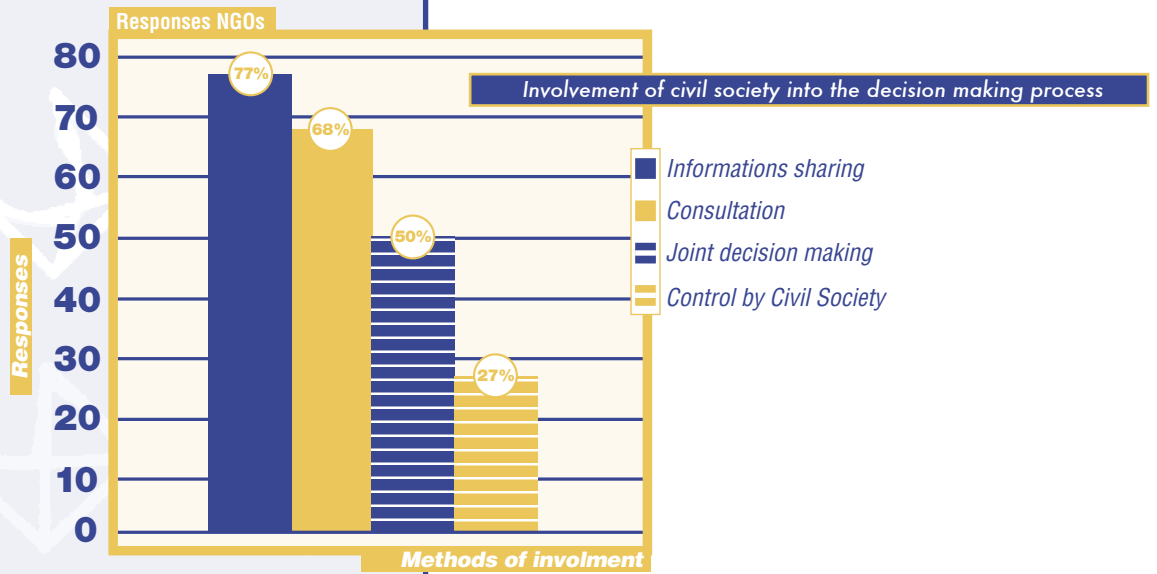
Main questions

1. How are the representatives of civil society involved in the decision-making processes of your local authority?

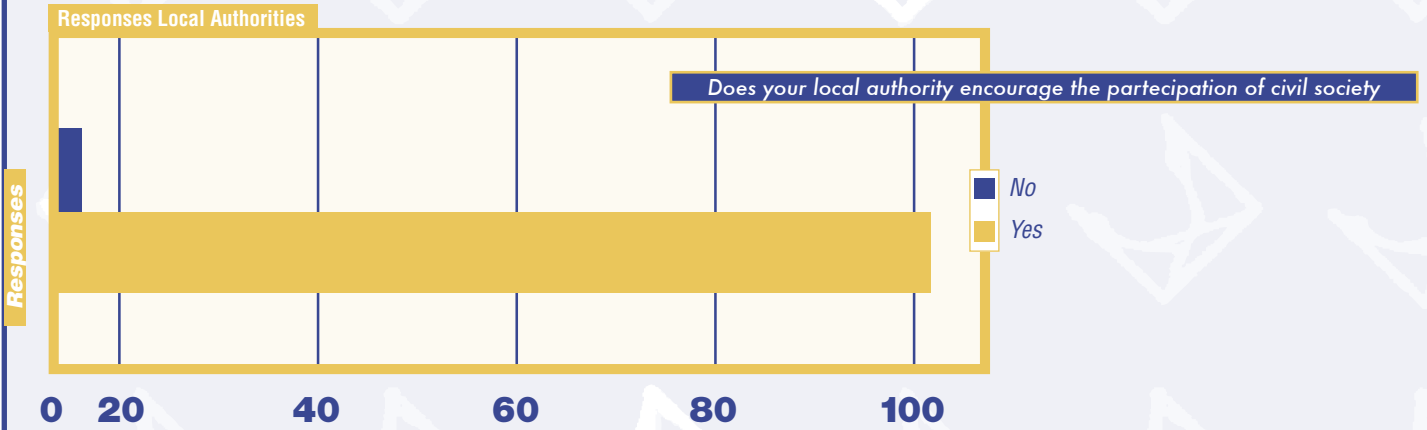


2. How does your local authority communicate with civil society to involve them to express their views?

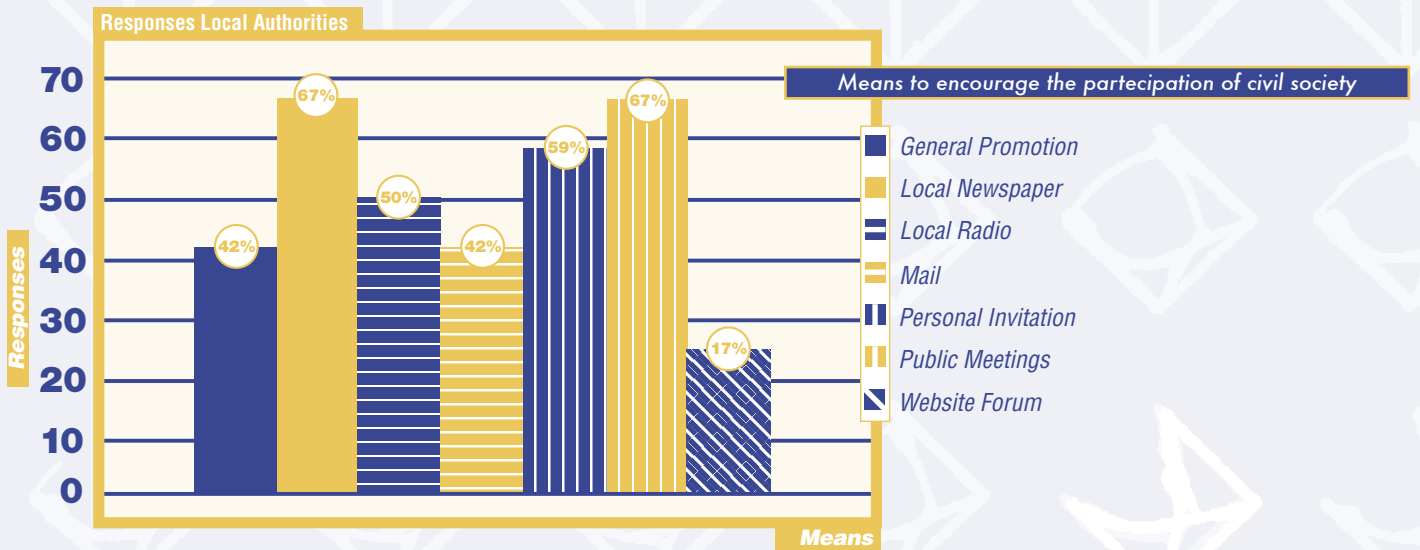




3. Does your local authority encourage civil society to participate in the decision-making processes?



4. Means to encourage the participation of civil society



5. In which of these areas is the participation of civil society more encouraged by your local authority?

Areas where Civil participation is more encouraged by your local authorities: