

Aan:  
de voorzitter en leden van de statencommissie Bestuur, Financiën en Economie  
  
i.a.a. overige leden provinciale staten

Assen, 24 september 2007  
Ons kenmerk 2007012031  
Behandeld door mevrouw J.Stapert (0592) 36 58 40  
Onderwerp: Eindrapport "Hanse Passage project: Best practices for regional  
parliaments"

Geachte commissieleden,

Als uw vertegenwoordigers van de Nieuwe Hanze Interregio (NHI) bieden wij u hierbij  
aan het eindrapport van het project "Best practices for regional parliaments.  
De toenmalige vertegenwoordigers en deelnemers aan het project,  
mevrouw M.J. Kaal en de heer H. Baas, hebben provinciale staten bij brief van 14  
februari 2007 uitgebreid geïnformeerd met een tussenrapportage over het project.  
Ter informatie is deze brief bijgevoegd. De in de brief genoemde voorlopige  
eindconclusie blijft gehandhaafd.

Hoogachtend,

de Drentse leden van de NHI,

L. Bomhof,  
E. Hemsteede

Aan:  
de statencommissie Bestuur, Financiën en Economie

i.a.a. overige leden provinciale staten

Assen, 14 februari 2007

Ons kenmerk 2007001987

Behandeld door mevrouw J. Stapert (0592) 36 58 40

Onderwerp: Tussenrapportage "Hanse Passage project: Best practices for regional parliaments"

Geachte commissieleden,

Op 22 september 2004 hebben provinciale staten ingestemd met deelname aan het project Best practices models for regional parliaments in het kader van het Hanse Passage-programma. Daaraan voorafgaand is het voorstel besproken in uw commissie van 8 september 2004.

Als uw vertegenwoordiger en deelnemer aan het project willen wij u graag nog in deze statenperiode de tussenresultaten van het project ter informatie aanbieden. Het eindrapport wordt in juni van dit jaar verwacht en zal uiteraard ook aan u worden voorgelegd.

Een beschrijving van het project, de deelnemers, hoe de uitvoering tot stand is gekomen, wat de Drentse inbreng is geweest en de stand van zaken kan als volgt worden omschreven.

*De deelnemende partners zijn:*

De parlementen van de regio's Dolnoslaskie, Pomorskie en Lubelskie (Polen), Groningen, Flevoland, Fryslân, Drenthe, Overijssel en Noord-Holland (Nederland), Niedersachsen en Bremen (Duitsland) en Haute Normandie (Frankrijk).

*Projectbeschrijving*

De 12 regionale parlementen willen ervaringen uitwisselen over de wijze waarop zij omgaan met de uitdagingen die voortvloeien uit de ontwikkelingen binnen de Europese Unie. De volksvertegenwoordigers zullen in het project hun rol en verantwoordelijkheden bespreken aan de hand van geselecteerde praktijkvoorbeelden. De resulterende conclusies en aanbevelingen zullen worden teruggekoppeld naar de eigen parlementen.

### *Projectmanagement*

De provincie Flevoland heeft het projectleiderschap op zich genomen. Na een goede start en uitstekend georganiseerde bijeenkomsten in Polen stakte het management tijdens de derde bijeenkomst in Flevoland, maart 2006. De uitwerking van de projecten, zie uitvoering, is mede hierdoor niet geworden wat ervan was verwacht. De projectleider heeft uiteindelijk in november 2006 besloten het projectleiderschap terug te geven. De provincie Flevoland heeft iemand binnen de eigen organisatie bereid gevonden het project af te ronden.

### *Uitvoering*

Het project 'Best practices for Regional Parliaments' is het enige project in het Hanse Passage programma waarin politici de deelnemers zijn. In het project wisselen 24 volksvertegenwoordigers uit 12 Hanse Passage regio's ervaringen uit op terreinen als structurele en culturele verschillen in het bestuur, beleidsontwikkeling, het betrekken van burgers enz.

Het uitwisselingsproject werd voorbereid met behulp van een vergelijkend onderzoek naar de betrokken regionale parlementen, uitgevoerd door het Centrum voor Lokale Democratie in Rotterdam.

Van 7-9 september 2005 ontmoetten de parlementariërs elkaar voor de eerste keer in Gdansk (Polen). Gesproken werd over de resultaten van het vergelijkend onderzoek, de eigen ervaringen en het selecteren van onderwerpen voor praktijkvoorbeelden. Bovendien werd veel tijd ingeruimd om elkaar beter te leren kennen en informatie uit te wisselen over elkaars cultuur en politieke omstandigheden.

Eind november 2005 werd in Lublin (Polen) in een uitstekende atmosfeer het project voortgezet. Een groot aantal praktijkvoorbeelden werden door de deelnemers gepresenteerd. Daarvan werden er uiteindelijk 8 uitgekozen om verder uitgewerkt te worden tijdens de afsluitende bijeenkomst in maart 2006 in Flevoland. De ambitie werd uitgesproken om goede ideeën van elkaar over te nemen. Vanuit Drenthe hebben wij het project DrEUn ingebracht.

De 8 succesvolle praktijkvoorbeelden werden in werkgroepen besproken:

#### Debat Instituut

Het parlement organiseert debatten met burgers in instellingen over relevante thema's.

#### Jeugdparticipatie

Hoe jongeren meer te betrekken bij regionale politiek en het besluitvormingsproces.

#### Burgerpetitie

Een formeel recht voor burgers om het regionale parlement een petitie aan te bieden.

#### Regionale Raad voor sociale aangelegenheden

#### E-government

#### Burgerjury

Burgers die een jury samenstellen die plannen en ideeën van het regionale parlement beoordelen.

#### Het ondernemende parlement

Het maken van een match tussen een parlementariër en een ondernemer.

### Drents Europa Netwerk

Een platform voor gemeenteraads- en statenleden voor uitwisseling van kennis van en ervaring op het gebied van Europa en Europabeleid.

Iedere partner moest één of twee projecten uitzoeken om die te implementeren in de eigen regio. Wij hebben de keus gemaakt om het project Jeugdparticipatie in Drenthe meer onder de aandacht te brengen. Vooruitlopende op het eindresultaat van het project is het meer betrekken van de jeugd al tot uitdrukking gebracht met de activiteiten rondom de verkiezingen van provinciale staten. Zo zijn de jongeren betrokken bij het ontwerpen van een campagne om de jeugd meer te betrekken bij de verkiezingen. Verder maken ze een standpuntenoverzicht voor de website, en denken en kijken ze mee bij de uitvoering van diverse zaken rondom de verkiezingen.

De projectleider verzamelde de gedetailleerde beschrijvingen en andere relevante informatie over de 8 praktijkvoorbeelden teneinde ze in een klein boek te kunnen publiceren. Deze informatie werd eveneens gezonden aan de deelnemers zodat het gebruikt kan worden voor de terugkoppeling aan de eigen parlementen. De projectleider zegde bovendien toe dat zij contact zou leggen met twee verwante Hanse Passage projecten, te weten E-government en Jeugdparticipatie.

Naast deze intensieve werkzaamheden was er nog tijd voor een aantal bijzondere culturele activiteiten in Lublin. Alle deelnemers keerden enthousiast en geïnspireerd naar huis terug.

Van 22-24 maart 2006 vond de derde bijeenkomst plaats in Flevoland. De heer Pröpper schetste het theoretisch kader van betrekken van burgers bij beleid. Ervaring over de projecten werd wederom uitgewisseld, maar al snel werd de conclusie getrokken dat de tijd tussen de tweede en de derde bijeenkomst te kort was geweest om een gekozen project goed terug te koppelen aan het eigen parlement. Ook werd geconstateerd dat een betere beschrijving van de projecten noodzakelijk was.

Tijdens de meeting in Flevoland is nog eens uiteengezet het belang van regionale samenwerking binnen de EU.

De discussie daarover spitste zich vooral toe op de wijze waarop deze eerste aanzet in de toekomst kan worden gecontinueerd en op de problemen die met name de Poolse parlementariërs hadden met de eigen politieke prioriteiten. De gekozen thema's zijn heel boeiend, maar werden toch een beetje als "luxe-probleem" gezien in het licht van de nog grote politieke en sociaal-economische achterstand van Polen. Alle deelnemers hechten er overigens aan om aan dit project op de een of andere wijze vervolg te geven. Het is aan de projectleider om een en ander verder uit te zoeken.

Op 10 januari 2007 kwamen een aantal van de projectdeelnemers in Bremen bij elkaar aan de zijlijn van een Hanse Passage conferentie over E-democratie. Het doel van de ontmoeting was om afspraken te maken over de te nemen stappen om het project af te ronden. De voorzitter van het Bremer parlement, de heer Christian Weber, verwelkomde de deelnemers in de historische raadszaal. Hij juichte de betrokkenheid van parlementariërs bij een internationaal project als de Hanse Passage toe. Meestal nemen uitsluitend ambtenaren, bedrijven of universiteiten aan dit soort projecten deel. Door het politieke niveau ook bij de uitwisseling te betrekken wordt Europa dichterbij de burger gebracht, aldus de heer Weber.

De parlementariërs bespraken vervolgens de wijze waarop de praktijkvoorbeelden het beste aan de eigen parlementen zouden kunnen worden gepresenteerd. Het eindrapport zal worden opgesteld door de projectleider in nauwe samenwerking met de deelnemers. Voorts werd overeengekomen dat op de website van de Hanse Passage een politiek forum voor de deelnemers zal worden ingericht.

*Voorlopige eindconclusie*

Hoewel het project nog niet volledig is afgerond kunnen we nu al aangeven dat wij deelname aan het project hebben gewaardeerd en als zinvol hebben ervaren. Met name de internationale contacten met de nieuwe EU-lidstaten zoals de collega's uit Polen waren zeer waardevol. We hebben geleerd dat wederzijds begrip voor een groot deel wordt bepaald door inzicht in de verschillende (bestuurs)culturen.

Hoogachtend,

de Drentse leden van het parlementariërsforum van de Nieuwe Hanze Interregio,

H. Baas,  
M.J. Kaal

HANSE PASSAGE PROJECT

# BEST PRACTICES FOR REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS



**HANSE PASSAGE PROJECT**

# **BEST PRACTICES FOR REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS**

**THE CITIZENS' MOTION, FREE HANSEATIC CITY OF BREMEN**  
**DREUN: DRENTH EUROPE NETWORK, PROVINCE OF DRENTH**  
**SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (CESR), REGION HAUTE NORMANDIE**  
**THE ENTERPRISING PARLIAMENT, PROVINCE OF GRONINGEN**  
**YOUTH, REGION AND PARLIAMENT, POMORSKIE VOIVODESHIP**  
**DEBATE INSTITUTE, PROVINCE OF OVERIJSEL**  
**FRISIAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT, PROVINCE OF FRYSLAN**  
**CITIZENS' JURY IN THE PROCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING, PROVINCE OF FLEVOLAND**



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## FOREWORD

The Hanse Passage programme is a co-operation between 15 regions from 6 EU member States: the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Latvia. It is supported from the Interreg III C programme as a so-called Regional Framework Operation. One of the 23 sub-projects within the Hanse Passage programme focused on exchange of experiences and best practice between representatives from the partner regions' parliaments.

Normally, regional parliaments are not directly involved in EU projects within their regions. But here was a quite unique opportunity created for regional parliamentarians to collect "own" experiences in what interregional co-operation is about whilst jointly searching for best practices and considering their implementation back home in their regions. Being confronted with all the differences in constitution, in regional responsibilities, in forms of organisation, in procedures, in language and not to forget in political culture was a new and certainly interesting experience in itself for the 24 parliamentarians participating actively within this project.

In this context and given the fact that only 4 relatively short meetings were held the elaboration of 8 good practice examples of how to involve citizens in regional politics is a respectable result.

I appeal to the parliaments of the 12 participating regions to seriously discuss the best practices selected and presented in this report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M.J.E.M. Jager', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

M.J.E.M. Jager,

The Queen's Commissioner in the Province of Flevoland,  
Chairman of the Flevoland regional parliament

# INTRODUCTION

## **Best Practices for Regional Parliaments**

Between 2005 and 2007 representatives of the regional parliaments from 12 Hanse Passage\* regions - Bremen, Dolnoslaskie, Drenthe, Flevoland, Fryslan, Groningen, Haute Normandie, Lower Saxony, Lubelskie, Noord-Holland, Overijssel and Pomorskie took part in a project "Best practice models for regional parliaments". The project was led by the Dutch Province of Flevoland.

During four meetings the participants had a chance to learn more about structures, competences and roles of various regional institutions, with particular emphasis on the functioning of regional parliaments in partner regions.

To facilitate this mutual exchange of experiences a comparative study on the role of regional parliaments in the regions' governmental structure was conducted by the Centre for Local Democracy at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The study pointed out that there are essential differences between the analysed countries.

In order to learn from each other on concrete examples and deepen their understanding of different ways the regional parliaments function, the parliamentarians participating in the project in the first round of discussion selected three main topics of interest for further comparison:

- 1 How to increase citizens' participation in political processes
- 2 Establishing and using networks in political processes
- 3 Strengthening the role and presence of regional Parliaments in Brussels

This focus on concrete issues led in the second round of discussion to the identification of different good practices existing in particular regions on citizens' participation. The 8 best ones were worked out in further detail.

The present paper documents information collected and presented during project meetings by the regions being the "owners" of these best practices. It comprises also comments and results of discussions held on them with other project partners.

Even a perfunctory reading of the text reveals the unique character of the project as such - the participants of the project were parliamentarians themselves! And these were parliamentarians who selected the practices that they found most interesting. Seldom are the representatives of the political level so closely and directly involved in activities of European projects.

In principle, all 8 best practices described here can be "transferred" and implemented within other regions in and outside the EU. Most of them can also be used for implementation on the local level.

This publication should be therefore considered as a showcase for a variety of instruments addressing concrete policy making aspects already developed and tested in European regions. It is, however, left to the partner regions' parliaments to conduct discussions on the identified best practices and to consider whether or not they will introduce them in their own region.

The paper gives a short overview of the 8 best practices. It is hoped that this information will lead to a further fruitful and inspiring exchange of ideas and experiences between the regions of the Hanse Passage!

The Hanse Passage Programme is a Regional Framework Operation (RFO) implemented under the Community Initiative Programme Interreg IIIC. It has been designed to build up strong, multinational partnerships among regional actors from fifteen regions in four old and two new EU-Member States. The programme grew out a 10-year multilateral co-operation between the partners of the New Hanse Interregio - the northern Dutch Provinces of Groningen, Drenthe, Fryslân, Overijssel and the German states of Lower Saxony and Bremen, which in 2002 decided to develop a Regional Framework Operation (RFO), called Hanse Passage.

### **Structures of regional government compared:**

Centre for Local Democracy, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2005

The study presented essential differences and similarities in administrative systems between the countries involved i.e. France, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland. Elaborated structures of regional governments exist in all the four countries. Still, the fact that there is a kind of regional government says nothing about the scope of responsibilities that are entrusted to the regional government, about their freedom to initiate policies on their own accord or about power and influence.

The variation is a logical consequence of the fact that the analysed countries have quite different systems of national and sub-national government growing out of different state traditions. The countries vary widely in the structure and functioning of their regional governments. Differentiation amongst regional governments within the same country is also apparent in varying degrees.

In all four countries the tasks and responsibilities of regional government are a complex mix of autonomy and co-governance with national administration. The specific mix and the

discretionary freedom of regional government to take its own initiatives vary from country to country, though. In Germany for example, the Länder have considerable autonomy in all responsibilities that are not explicitly attributed to the Bund whereas in France regional government has a moderate degree of freedom to initiate policies on its own.

Regional government has often a dual structure. One component involves a directly elected regional parliament (Provinciale Staten in the Netherlands, Landtag in Lower Saxony, Bürgerschaft in Bremen, Sejmik in Poland and Conseil Régionale in France), which elects its own executive board and is supported by its own administrative apparatus. The other component, which is more or less interconnected with the regional parliament, involves some representative of the national government. This representative is usually an official or an organization that acts as a supervisor on behalf of the national government and administration.

In the Netherlands, the responsibilities of the Queen's Commissioner include supervision on behalf of the national government. The same can be said about the "prefect" in France and the "voivod" in Poland. Germany is an exception. This is hardly surprising, though, given the federal structure of Germany, which allows considerable autonomy for the Länder in their own fields of policy.

The regional parliament and executive board have always the support of an administrative organisation that is instrumental in preparing and executing policy decisions. Within the parliament itself, there is always a committee structure. Committees play a relatively important role in preparing the policy decisions as a whole and in supervising the executive board.

In most countries, executive boards and administrative organisations are presumed to have more influence on the formation and execution of policy than the parliament does. The responsibilities of regional government include long-term planning tasks, particularly in the fields of spatial and economic development.

Probably due to the position and tasks of regional government between the national and local levels, the direct citizen participation is rather limited and tends to focus on specific topics only. But again the "distance" between the citizen and the government is "greater" in some countries than in others. That means, for example, that in some countries formal competence in launching new policy initiatives rests mainly with the regional government, whereas in others instruments have been adopted to make it possible for citizens to play a more active role in the policy-making process, and even to undertake legislative initiatives.

## Background

Until 1994 parliamentary decisions could only be initiated by a motion tabled by either the Senate (the government of the State of Bremen) or members of Parliament. Citizens were not able to influence the specific topics of parliamentary policy making processes within an electoral term. The Citizens' Motion was introduced on 7 November 1994 by means of an amendment to the State Constitution following a referendum held on 16 October 1994. Its aim is to enable inhabitants of the State of Bremen to initiate parliamentary proceedings.

# THE CITIZENS' MOTION

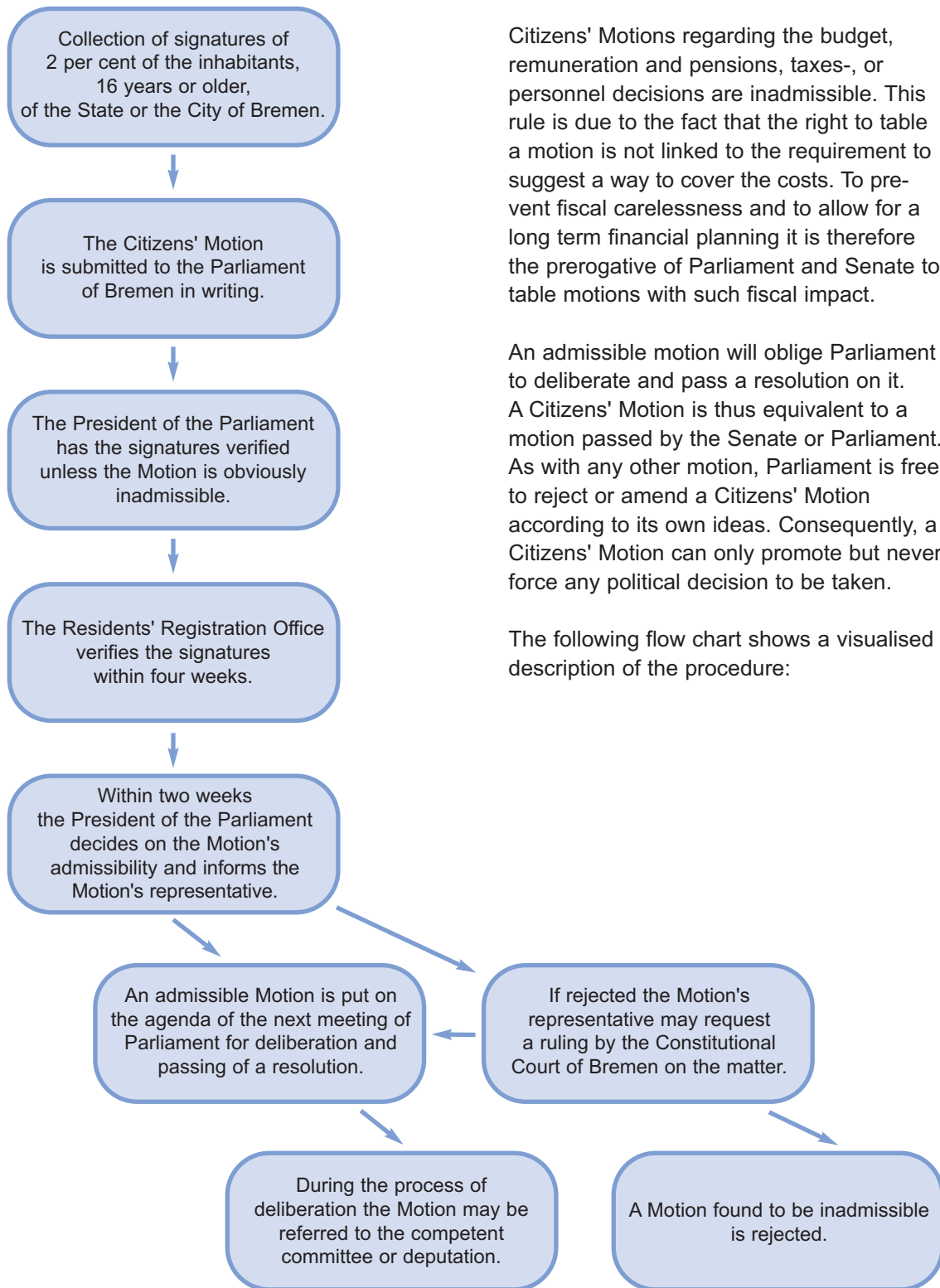
## FREE HANSEATIC CITY OF BREMEN

## Description

The Citizens' Motion is a request to Parliament to take the decision suggested by the motion. Contrary to plebiscitary legislation via a referendum, where an elaborated bill is required, the Citizens' Motion is not subject to such a strict formal requirement. The Citizens' Motion therefore offers a wider range of policy areas in which parliamentary proceedings can be initiated by the citizens. All inhabitants who are aged 16 or over can sign a petition for a Citizens' Motion.

According to the dual nature of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen as a state within the federal system of Germany on the one hand and a city on the other, the Parliament of Bremen functions as a regional parliament (Parliament of the State of Bremen = Landtag) and a local parliament (elected City Council of Bremen = Stadtbürgerschaft) in one. In matters relating to regional policy all inhabitants of the State of Bremen - meaning inhabitants of Bremen and Bremerhaven - can sign, whereas in matters of local policy making only inhabitants of the city of Bremen can sign.

The initiator or the group of initiators of a Citizens' Motion have to collect signatures of at least two per cent of all inhabitants of the State of Bremen (in regional affairs) or of the City of Bremen (in local affairs). After having gathered the required number of signatures, the Citizens' Motion must be submitted to Parliament in writing. The only requirement regarding the content of a Citizens' Motion is that it asks Parliament to take the decision suggested by it. This decision must be within the Parliament's constitutional sphere of activity.



Citizens' Motions regarding the budget, remuneration and pensions, taxes-, or personnel decisions are inadmissible. This rule is due to the fact that the right to table a motion is not linked to the requirement to suggest a way to cover the costs. To prevent fiscal carelessness and to allow for a long term financial planning it is therefore the prerogative of Parliament and Senate to table motions with such fiscal impact.

An admissible motion will oblige Parliament to deliberate and pass a resolution on it. A Citizens' Motion is thus equivalent to a motion passed by the Senate or Parliament. As with any other motion, Parliament is free to reject or amend a Citizens' Motion according to its own ideas. Consequently, a Citizens' Motion can only promote but never force any political decision to be taken.

The following flow chart shows a visualised description of the procedure:


## Results

Since its introduction in 1994 six Citizens' Motions were submitted to the State Parliament of Bremen and three to the elected City Council of Bremen. The topics of these motions included:

- The demand for free provision of teaching materials in school (rejected)
- Preservation of recreation areas and natural spaces in town planning (adopted in modified form)
- Opposing the sale and privatisation of the Municipal Housing Society (adopted)
- Opposing research on primates at the University of Bremen (rejected)

The instrument of the Citizens' Motion is anchored in the Constitution of the State of Bremen. It primarily serves the purpose of involving citizens more intensively in the formation of political objectives during an electoral period. Citizens are enabled to ensure that Parliament deliberates on specific issues and that these issues and the citizens' view on them become object of public debate. These purposes seem to be fulfilled by giving citizens the option to submit motions to Parliament equivalent to the motions submitted by the Senate or Parliament itself. However, one has to be aware of the fact that the political decision on the issue is finally made by Parliament and not the citizens. This purpose could only be reached by the means of a referendum.

For politicians the instrument offers another aspect. Knowing that the issue of a citizens' motion reaches a certain percentage of voters, political parties can profile themselves by their way of dealing with the topic in the parliamentary debate. The main challenges for the successful introduction of this best practice model could be seen in the communication of the possibilities and limits of the tool and in finding the right balance for an adequate threshold to table such a motion. The threshold should be rather low, without promoting "inflationary" use of the tool.



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## Background

DrEUn stands for Drenthé Europe Network. The abbreviation "Dreun" is the Dutch word for "boom" or "blow". DrEUn is a network for regional and local parliamentarians. It is established in 2004 to exchange information and expertise on EU topics. Citizens are not actively involved in this network.

The network was initiated by three parliamentarians from the Province of Drenthé. Their aims were to improve "EU-awareness" of city councillors and provincial parliamentarians and to emphasize the importance of EU decision making and influence. In their vision city councils and the provincial parliament should be more Europe minded whilst making policy decisions, as

- Europe is also a Europe of the regions.
- Drenthé receives lot of support (read: money) from the EU.
- The EU has a lot of influence on national -and thus regional and local- legislation.

## DrEUN: DRENTHÉ EUROPE NETWORK PROVINCE OF DRENTHÉ

## Description

DrEUn organises meetings with experts, workshops and working visits for regional and local parliamentarians and councillors. The participants, who are politicians from the Province of Drenthé, meet at least twice a year.





The questions and topics of DrEUn concern the way in which city councillors and parliamentarians of the Province of Drenthe use European formats in decision making. For example, when should a politician go to Brussels for support? How can parliamentarians check if the proposals and decisions they make are "Europe proof"? And what is going to happen to the European Regional Policy? The influence of Europe on municipal and provincial policies is also an issue at the meetings.

DrEUn has a website for city councillors and for provincial parliamentarians: [www.dreun.drenthe.nl](http://www.dreun.drenthe.nl). The website contains information about meetings and the content of lectures by experts, publications about the EU and links to other relevant websites. The website of DrEUn has the primary goal of exchanging information and people can email publications, questions, answers and comments to their colleagues.

## Results

- DrEUn website.
- In February 2005 a first meeting was organised for fifty city councillors and provincial parliamentarians to exchange information and knowledge about European policy and legislation.
- At the second meeting in October 2005 the consequences of the Dutch "no" against the European Constitution were subject of discussion. There were also workshops about habitat and water regulation guidelines and about the EU agriculture policies.
- In June 2006, 24 city councillors and provincial parliamentarians from Drenthe visited Kreis Leer in Germany. They looked at how they deal with the implementation of European rules on nature and environment.



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### Background

By French law, in 1964 a Social Economic Council (Conseil Economique et Social Régional - CESR) has been created in every region of France. The aim is to have input from representatives from the socio-economical sector (trade unions, professional associations, business and independent activities) on the regional policy and decision making process.

## SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (CESR) REGION HAUTE NORMANDIE

### Description

The CESR is the consultative body of the Region. It has 74 councillors who are appointed by the Prefect of the Region for six years. The background of the members is as follows:

- 25 representatives of businesses and independent activities
- 25 representatives of trade union personnel organisations
- 21 representatives from regional community associations
- 3 qualified persons

The councillors participate in the following CESR commissions:

- 1 Budget, planning, coordination
- 2 Agriculture, tourism, local development
- 3 Quality of life
- 4 Economic development and infrastructures
- 5 Education and training
- 6 Prospecting and evaluation

It is assisted by a President with a bureau of 18 members and a cabinet composed of a director, a secretary general, three research leaders and two secretaries.

This Socio-Economic Council exercises its activities in three arenas:

- 1 The CESR must be consulted and issues opinions on planning documents and strategic guidelines, on the Central Government Region Plan Contract and on the Regional budget.
- 2 The CESR may also, at the request of the President of the Conseil Régional, deal with any other issues of an economic, social or cultural nature.
- 3 The CESR can, on its own initiative, deal with any topic relative to the Region. This degree of autonomy opens up a considerable field of investigation, with scope to explore new or potentially promising projects for the Region. It allows for preparing an inventory of a situation and communicating it to the Région. The CESR is then responsible for making short, medium and long-term proposals in the interest of Haute Normandie residents. These are then submitted to the Conseil Régional which takes them into consideration and may follow them up.

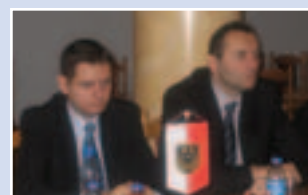
The CESR may also extend its remit to the following:

- Ongoing consideration of future prospects
- Evaluating Regional policies
- Promoting inter-regional co-operation
- Representing the community vis-à-vis external bodies

## Results

On account of the diversity of its representatives, the CESR is a forum for discussion, sharing of ideas and reflection, which results in proposals reflecting community interests in Haute-Normandie.

Its studies and advices are sent to all the relevant public and private institutions and are available to the public. As such the Council improves the ongoing social dialogue and the policy making process. Although politicians are not obliged to follow the advice of the CESR they often do, as it offers specific inputs for their decision making processes and increases public acceptance of their decisions. This type of consulting agency is growing at every level of French administration.



### CESR

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## Background

The Enterprising Parliament is an initiative of the Confederation of Northern Netherlands Industry and Employers (known as VNO-NCW Noord) and the Province of Groningen. The aim of the project is to bring Members of the Regional Parliament and regional entrepreneurs together in couples to improve mutual understanding and insight in each other's worlds.

The project is implemented and financed by VNO-NCW Noord and the Province of Groningen.

# THE ENTERPRISING PARLIAMENT PROVINCE OF GRONINGEN

## Description

At the start of the project a plenary meeting is organised where the participants meet each other. On the agenda is the project itself and a theme or topic that is relevant to all involved. Based on their participation forms the entrepreneurs and parliamentarians are matched for a period of one year. During this year they meet regularly and exchange experiences. In this way they get to understand each other's issues, problems, strategies, etcetera. Plenary meetings in which specific themes are discussed are periodically repeated.

The website of the Province of Groningen, press releases and articles for magazines of the target groups are used to generate interest in the initiative and to communicate the project.



## Results

In the first year of the project 23 couples of regional parliamentarians and entrepreneurs were formed. It was left to the matched couples themselves how, where and how often they would have a bilateral meeting. After nearly a year a second plenary meeting was organised. Previous to this meeting a short questionnaire was distributed among the participants. The event had a plenary meeting where the results of the questionnaire were presented and separate working groups in which topics of the Strategic Agenda of the Northern Netherlands were discussed.

At this meeting it was decided to give the project a follow up until the elections for the Regional Parliament would take place. After this the project was ended with a last plenary meeting. For this meeting the participants and all Members of the Regional Parliament were invited to discuss specific regional topics.

The results of the questionnaire give a positive evaluation of the project. Most contacts had been successful and the exchanges of experiences were valued as constructive. Two plenary meetings a year are considered valuable.

Things to improve are:

- The matching should be more accurate. To do so more information on the participants is needed, like branch, area and interests.
- Better monitoring, especially when the members of the Regional Parliament change as well as when couples are not functioning.
- Keeping a reserve list to be able to respond to or initiate changes.
- The production of a periodical newsletter.

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### Background

**This project focused on young people, regional parliamentarians and youth organisations. It brought together young people from six different European regions in Germany, Poland and Sweden.**

**The aim was to have an impact on:**

- **the promotion of youth participation in political processes**
- **intercultural learning**
- **the establishment of an European network**
- **the development of better understanding and respect for the people and cultures in the neighbouring countries**
- **the initiation of follow - up projects**

## YOUTH, REGION AND PARLIAMENT POMORSKIE VOIVODESHIP

**The project was an initiative of the Members of the Southern Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum, consisting of Schleswig - Holstein, Mecklenburg - Vorpommern, Skane, Pomorskie Voivodeship, Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship and Kaliningrad Oblast. It was supported by the regional parliaments and regional youth organisations. The EU Youth Programme financed it.**

### Description

The project had five different parts that built on each other:

- 1 A workshop was organised in which two young people and two parliamentarians per region participated. During the two day workshop the participants got to know each other, received more information about the project and got an introduction on some themes. One young person and one parliamentarian from the same region formed a team and every team had to find a partner team from another region. Together they conducted the second part of the project.



- 2 This was the networking and exchange part. The young person spent 8 to 10 days with his or her parliamentarian in the constituency and in the regional parliament. He or she got to know the work of the parliamentarian and the political structures and decision making processes. It was the task of the parliamentarian to introduce and inform the young person and to listen to his or her point of view.
- 3 After that, the young person visited the parliamentarian from the partner team in the foreign region for 8 to 10 days to learn about the commonalities and differences in the systems. The parliamentarian had to take care of the young person. This was supported by the participating youth organisations and by the administrations of the parliaments.
- 4 In a regional follow-up meeting the parliamentarians and young people discussed their experiences. They had the opportunity to publish their experiences in reports on the websites of the parliaments and the youth organisations.
- 5 The results and experiences from the project were presented by the young participants at a conference organised by the six regional parliaments. The young people were involved in the preparation of the conference, which gave them an opportunity to use their newly gained knowledge and to share their experiences with the conference participants.

## Results

The participants and direct/indirect target groups for the whole project include:

- 30 young people, who are active students, and 50 parliamentarians from 6 regions
- 5 youth organisations with ca. 60 member organisations that reach out to more than 500 000 young people
- 6 regional parliaments with approximately 250 members

The project is documented in newsletters, member magazines and on the websites of the partners.



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## Background

The involvement of citizens has become more of a topic since the Provincial Parliament established a more representative role: being responsive to societal needs, articulating those needs and translating them into policy initiatives and requests, deciding on the main policies, and undertaking scrutiny of the policy outcomes.

After the elections in 2003 the Provincial Parliament of Overijssel took the initiative to create its own communication policy. In this policy they stated that they would organise two or three public debates every year. It was stipulated that a public debate between the members of the Provincial Parliament and citizens is a good way to invest in their relationship. To debate with citizens on a topic is a way for Parliament to generate visions and opinions on an issue as citizens are challenged to describe the issues from their point of view and to share their solutions. This is useful when the Provincial Parliament takes initiative in preparing their own policy proposals or to give guidelines to the executive committee in a rather early stage of the policy-making.

Following a motion by a political party the first topic of the public debate was decided: living and caring for the future elderly.

## DEBATE INSTITUTE PROVINCE OF OVERIJSSSEL

### Description

- 1 The public debate started with a meeting of experts on the topic. The target of the expert meeting was to get a clear view on the different angles of the issue.
- 2 The Provincial Parliament requested from its Executive Committee a paper which described:
  - The current situation in the Province of Overijssel.
  - A description of the current demographic structure of the elderly population in Overijssel.
  - The most relevant social developments in the elderly population.
  - The relevant policies and laws on this topic.
  - Expected developments of the needs of the elderly in the future and a translation into expected numbers of, for example, housing and care institutions.



- An outline of expected, specific problems and issues in the year 2020 in Overijssel.

- 3 The paper itself was structured into three topics: spatial planning (for example, housing), welfare (for example, healthcare and wellbeing) and economical affairs (income). This structure offered the Provincial Parliament a method to approach the debate from different angles. And last but not least, the note contained three scenarios of the situation in 2020.
- 4 Through advertisements, the citizens of Overijssel were invited to register themselves as interested in the debate. All interested citizens were informed on the topic by being sent the paper.

Fourthly, the debate was organised in a special meeting in Deventer. In this debate all the scenarios were discussed and voted on by the citizens. In the end the outcome of the voting resulted in one scenario. The Provincial Parliament used the outcome as input for the process of making new policies on this topic.

The debate was organised and financed by the Provincial Parliament.

## Results

The results of the debate were published in a paper, which was presented to the political parties in the Provincial Parliament. In the policy making process, the politicians have used the outcomes to form their own opinion. The new policy on caring for the elderly was accepted in 2006. The debate also stimulated the Provincial Court of Audit to investigate the policy on caring for the future elderly on its efficiency and effectiveness.

The participating citizens and politicians have been very positive about the debate. Commonly accepted was that the notion that the period between the initiative and final debate was too long. The Provincial Parliament has decided that a committee of politicians should be in charge of the preparations of a debate. Because Overijssel is a large area, it was decided that a debate should be organised in three parts of the Province instead of one.

Following the evaluation of the public debate the concept of a Debate Institute has taken off and evolved into a centre with its own position and a budget from the Provincial Parliament.

The Debate Institute organises public debates and meetings and runs a website



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## Background

Once a year, the Province of Fryslân organises the Frisian Youth Parliament with the aim to increase the political awareness and participation of young people. The province's Board of Deputies and its civil servants developed the idea of a game for young people that simulates their provincial government so they can experience the workings of it. The project is financed and organised by the Province of Fryslân.

The project is targeted at young people aged 16 to 19 years old. Their level of education is secondary school. The participants are chosen by fellow pupils and will be supported by one of their teachers. About ninety students from a total of ten schools are participating.

## FRISIAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT PROVINCE OF FRYSLAN

## Description

The young people will follow a programme of three days in which they have to make proposals and decide which proposal(s) will be carried out. They work according to the real working method of the Provincial Council.

Each of the ten participating schools forms a political party. All parties delegate one member to the commissions, including one chair and one secretary. The secretary is also a member of the Order and Duplication group. This group is responsible for order and for printing and distribution of all the papers. There are eight commissions: Town and Rural Area Planning, Economic affairs, Traffic and Public Transport, Public Order and Safety, Recreation and Tourism, (Multi) Cultural Affairs, Environment and Nature management, Health and Care. The commissions try to make proposals with regard to the subject of their commission and they choose a deputy. The deputies form the government and they defend the proposals.

Beside the commissions there are two general chairs and one general secretary, chosen from the best participants of the year before. They are the chair and the secretary during the general meeting. The chairs help the commissions to make good proposals and the general secretary leads the order and duplication group. The Frisian Youth Parliament also has a press group, consisting of one member of each school. They are responsible for contact with the real press and they make four newspapers: One before the event begins, containing information about the schools and participants of the parliament, and one each day with all the news concerning the parliament and the proposals.

## programme

*day one* All commissions have private conversations with one politician and one civil servant about their subject to help them find possible proposals. A discussion with one politician will prevent a political discussion between politicians. Both discussions take one and a half hour. In the afternoon, after the gavel has been handed over officially by a member of the government to the general chairs of the Youth Parliament, the commissions prepare their proposals.

*day two* Working out the proposals is the order of this day and the commissions will try to find people or organisations who want to contribute to their proposals. In the evening the parties (schools) will gather and take a stand on the proposals.

*day three* This is the day of the general meeting of the Youth Parliament. All proposals will be discussed and possibly changed or provided with a motion and eventually adopted or turned down.

## preparations

To make the Youth Parliament work a steering committee is installed, which consists of one teacher of each participating school and two civil servants from the Province who are in charge of the process.

In preparation of their task the general chairs, the general secretary, the chairs and secretary of the commissions and the members of the press group receive instructions at a few meetings.

A few days before the event all participants receive the first newspaper of the press group and a shooting script.

## Results

The project has been running for 16 years. Although the results of increasing awareness are difficult to measure, it is felt that the Frisian Youth Parliament is an interesting and useful instrument to interest young people in politics and to increase their knowledge. The adopted proposals are being discussed by the Province's Board of Deputies afterwards and (if possible) they are carried out.

The young people are always very enthusiastic about their participation, especially when their adopted proposals are carried out, and have indicated that they gain more knowledge about the political decision making process and that they appreciate that. The event also generates a lot of press attention every year.



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### Background

The Province of Flevoland had to design a new Environmental Plan (Omgevingsplan), in which the province makes important choices on town and rural area developments and planning. Provinces are obliged to do so and to adjust the plan every six years. As an Environmental Plan has a lot of impact on residents and organisations, their involvement in the planning process is essential. To start communicating with citizens in an early stage of the policymaking process the Province developed the instrument of the Citizens' Jury.

## CITIZENS' JURY IN THE PROCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING PROVINCE OF FLEVOLAND

### Description

The instrument was designed as follows:

- Through advertisements in the local newspapers and a direct mailing to 5,000 citizens, people were invited to become a member of the citizens' jury. Out of the 350 reactions, three juries of fifteen people were selected. Together they had to represent the people living in a certain geographical area of the province.
- Members of lobby organisations and other pressure groups were not allowed to become jury-members.
- People who were not selected were given the opportunity to state their opinion via an internet panel.
- All three juries were informed about the plan, the process and the method. They were also trained in interview and discussion techniques.
- Three hearings were organised in which the juries asked experts, both external and from the province, for their opinions on elements of the plan.
- In meetings the juries discussed the plan to reach a shared opinion to advise the politicians.
- In a plenary meeting the juries presented their findings to the politicians. A discussion between the jury members and the politicians was encouraged so the jury members could obtain insight into how their opinions would be used.

This process was designed and supported by the VU University, Amsterdam and the Province. Altogether it took two years, starting from discussing the instrument of Citizens' Jury and ending with evaluating the project.

## Results

All the final conclusions and opinions of the juries were published in reports. The politicians used these and the outcomes of the plenary meeting to form their own opinion on the final design of the Environmental Plan.

The evaluation of the instrument gives the following findings:

- Specialized press, national newspapers and opinion magazines were all very interested in the new method, so it gained a lot of free publicity. However, it was more difficult to communicate the next phases of the process.
- The citizens who participated were very positive about their involvement, the process and the results. They mentioned acquiring more knowledge about the political decision making process and appreciating it.
- It seemed to be an almost natural process that the citizens were inclined to reach a compromise in their discussions, as politicians do.
- The result of those compromises was that the opinions of the Citizens' Jury were neither specific nor sharply articulated. The opinions of the Citizens' Jury came very close to the political compromises; one could also say that it confirmed the politicians in their own opinion.
- A very important value of this method was that it brought independent citizens together, not the already well known speakers (members from pressure groups and lobby organisations who always participate in public hearings).



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