The Council of Europe's work on e-democracy

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"Good Governance in the Information Society"

FTVI & FTRI 2010, Koblenz 25-26 March 2010

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

The Council of Europe

Core business

Develop, maintain and protect

- human rights
- pluralist democracy
- the rule of law

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".

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)*

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 digital divide and e-inclusion in the regions” Recommendation 263 (2009)
- “E-democracy: opportunities and risks for local authorities” Recommendation 274 (2009)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

Recommendation (2009) 1 on e-democracy

(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 a series of practical tools

  (e.g. A Set of generic tools; Roadmap and checklist for the introduction of e-democracy; Guide to the evaluation of e-democracy; Glossary of technical terms, to be found at www.coe.int/democracy).

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 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.**

Principles and guidelines for e-democracy
(Rec (2009)1)

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

E-DEMOCRACY

as a complementary channel of democratic participation, seeks to :

- **contribute to the transparency, accountability and responsiveness of democratic institutions;**
- **facilitate democratic engagement and deliberation;**
- **increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of the democratic process.**

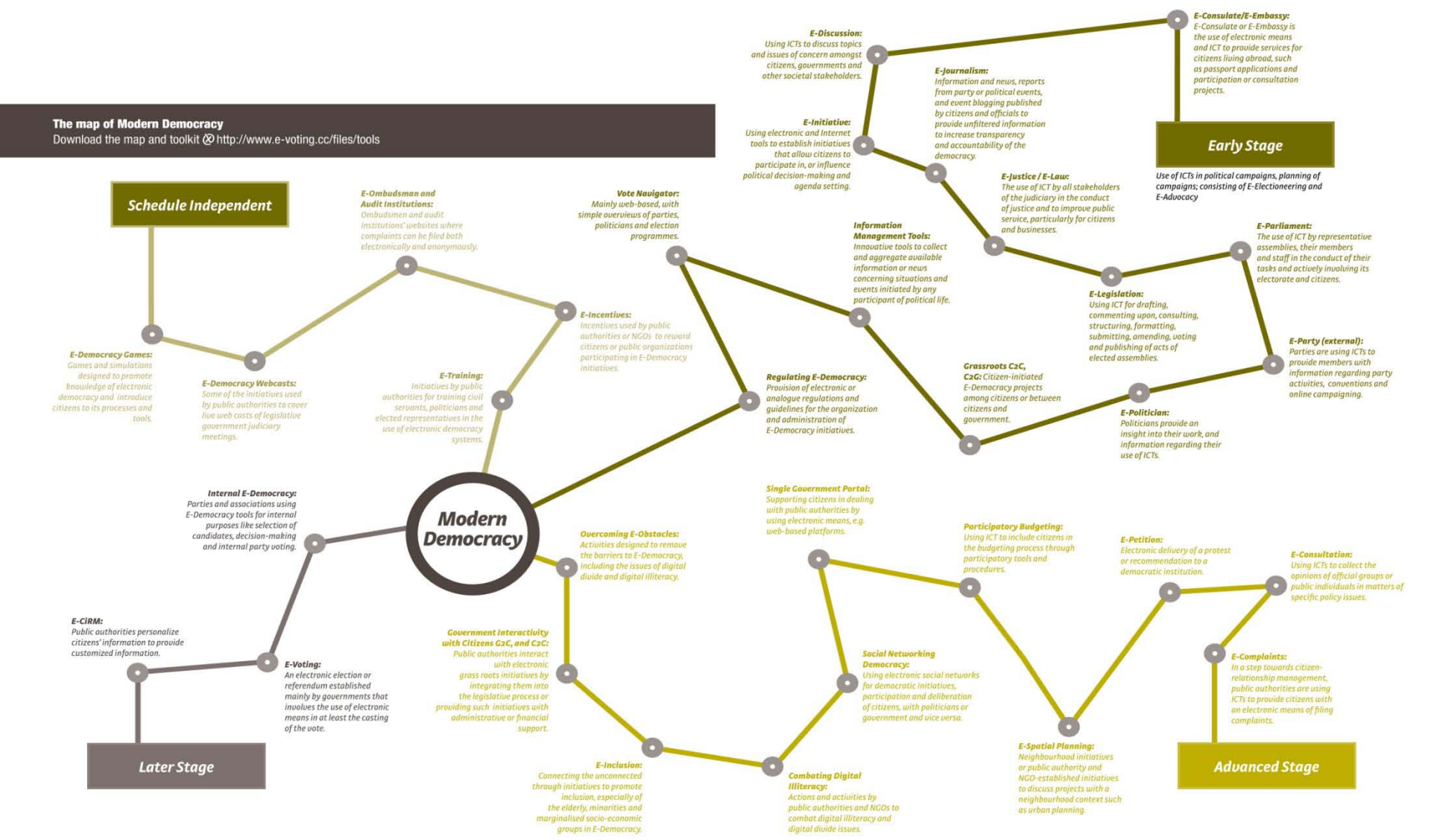
Opportunities

- opens possibilities of civic participation in all stages of democratic processes;
- offers new ways to reinvigorate representative democracy and to review its traditional concepts;
- can help to re-attract citizens' declining interest in politics;
- creates new possibilities for civic initiatives.

Challenges

E-democracy stakeholders need to:

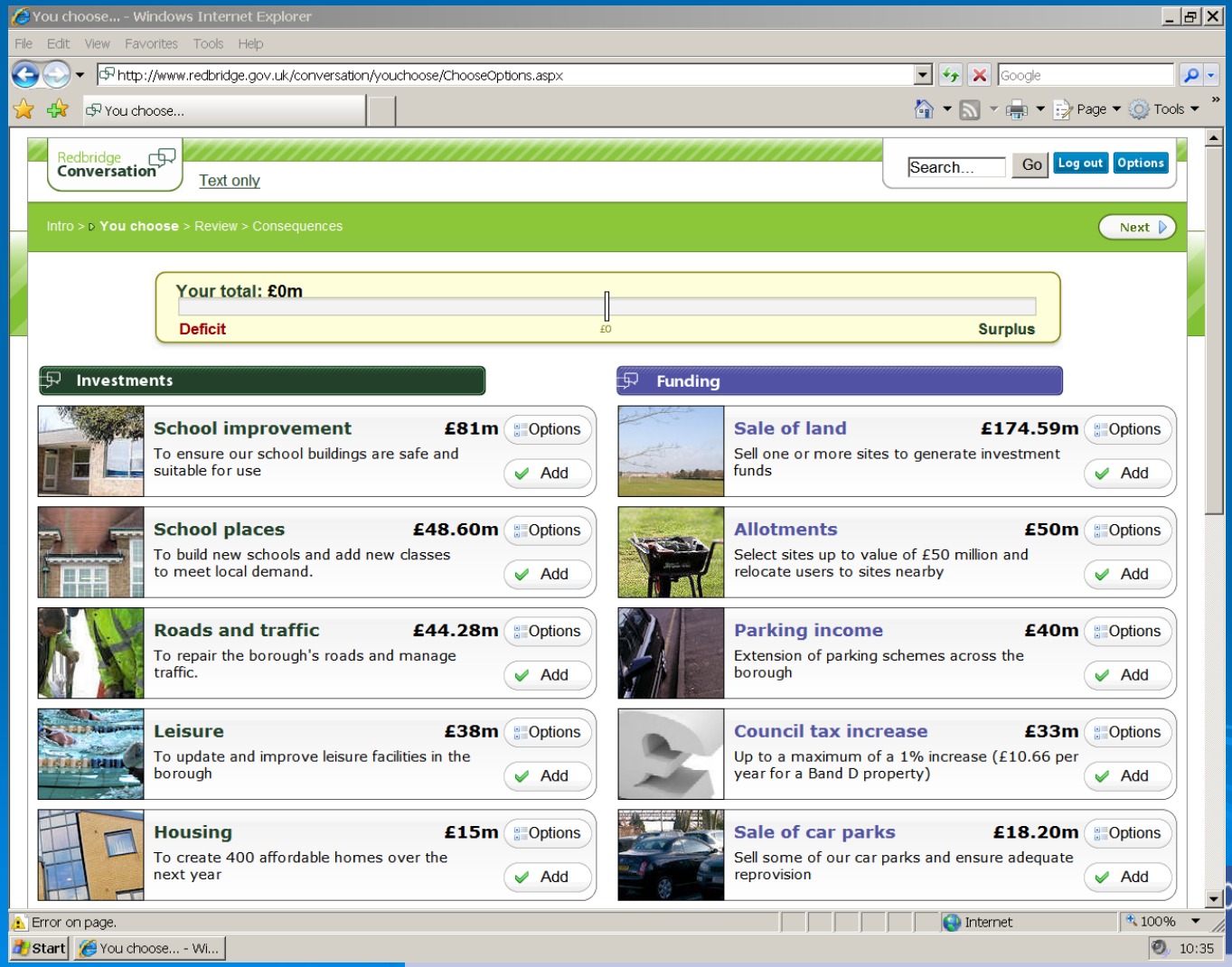
- **facilitate accessibility, use and inclusion;**
- **ensure that the contributions of individuals are taken into consideration in decision-making processes;**
- **seek the involvement of all interested parties to avoid the risks of a social divide;**
- **harness the potential of the constantly evolving social networking tools;**
- **manage the risks linked to the presentation of inappropriate and illegal content.**


The map of Modern Democracy
Download the map and toolkit @ http://www.e-voting.cc/files/tools
Schedule Independent
E-Democracy Games:
Games and simulations designed to promote knowledge of electronic democracy and introduce citizens to its processes and tools.
E-Democracy Webcasts:
Some of the initiatives used by public authorities to cover live web casts of legislative government judiciary meetings.
E-Ombudsman and Audit Institutions:
Ombudsmen and audit institutions' websites where complaints can be filed both electronically and anonymously.
E-Incentives:
Incentives used by public authorities or NGOs to reward citizens or public organizations participating in E-Democracy initiatives.
E-Training:
Initiatives by public authorities for training civil servants, politicians and elected representatives in the use of electronic democracy systems.
Vote Navigator:
Mainly web-based, with simple overviews of parties, politicians and election programmes.
Regulating E-Democracy:
Provision of electronic or analogue regulations and guidelines for the organization and administration of E-Democracy initiatives.
Internal E-Democracy:
Parties and associations using E-Democracy tools for internal purposes like selection of candidates, decision-making and internal party voting.
Modern Democracy
E-CiRM:
Public authorities personalize citizens' information to provide customized information.
E-Voting:
An electronic election or referendum established mainly by governments that involves the use of electronic means in at least the casting of the vote.
Later Stage
Overcoming E-Obstacles:
Activities designed to remove the barriers to E-Democracy, including the issues of digital divide and digital illiteracy.
Government Interactivity with Citizens G2C, and C2C:
Public authorities interact with electronic grass roots initiatives by integrating them into the legislative process or providing such initiatives with administrative or financial support.
E-Inclusion:
Connecting the unconnected through initiatives to promote inclusion, especially of the elderly, minorities and marginalised socio-economic groups in E-Democracy.
Single Government Portal:
Supporting citizens in dealing with public authorities by using electronic means, e.g. web-based platforms.
Social Networking Democracy:
Using electronic social networks for democratic initiatives, participation and deliberation of citizens, with politicians or government and vice versa.
Combating Digital Illiteracy:
Actions and activities by public authorities and NGOs to combat digital illiteracy and digital divide issues.
E-Discussion:
Using ICTs to discuss topics and issues of concern amongst citizens, governments and other societal stakeholders.
E-Initiative:
Using electronic and Internet tools to establish initiatives that allow citizens to participate in, or influence political decision-making and agenda setting.
E-Consulate/E-Embassy:
E-Consulate or E-Embassy is the use of electronic means and ICT to provide services for citizens living abroad, such as passport applications and participation or consultation projects.
E-Journalism:
Information and news, reports from party or political events, and event blogging published by citizens and officials to provide unfiltered information to increase transparency and accountability of the democracy.
Early Stage
Use of ICTs in political campaigns, planning of campaigns; consisting of E-Electioneering and E-Advocacy
E-Justice / E-Law:
The use of ICT by all stakeholders of the judiciary in the conduct of justice and to improve public service, particularly for citizens and businesses.
Information Management Tools:
Innovative tools to collect and aggregate available information or news concerning situations and events initiated by any participant of political life.
E-Parliament:
The use of ICT by representative assemblies, their members and staff in the conduct of their tasks and actively involving its electorate and citizens.
E-Legislation:
Using ICT for drafting, commenting upon, consulting, structuring, formatting, submitting, amending, voting and publishing of acts of elected assemblies.
E-Party (external):
Parties are using ICTs to provide members with information regarding party activities, conventions and online campaigning.
Grassroots C2C, C2G: Citizen-initiated E-Democracy projects among citizens or between citizens and government.
E-Politician:
Politicians provide an insight into their work, and information regarding their use of ICTs.
Participatory Budgeting:
Using ICT to include citizens in the budgeting process through participatory tools and procedures.
E-Petition:
Electronic delivery of a protest or recommendation to a democratic institution.
E-Consultation:
Using ICTs to collect the opinions of official groups or public individuals in matters of specific policy issues.
E-Spatial Planning:
Neighbourhood initiatives or public authority and NGO-established initiatives to discuss projects with a neighbourhood context such as urban planning.
E-Complaints:
In a step towards citizen-relationship management, public authorities are using ICTs to provide citizens with an electronic means of filing complaints.
Advanced Stage

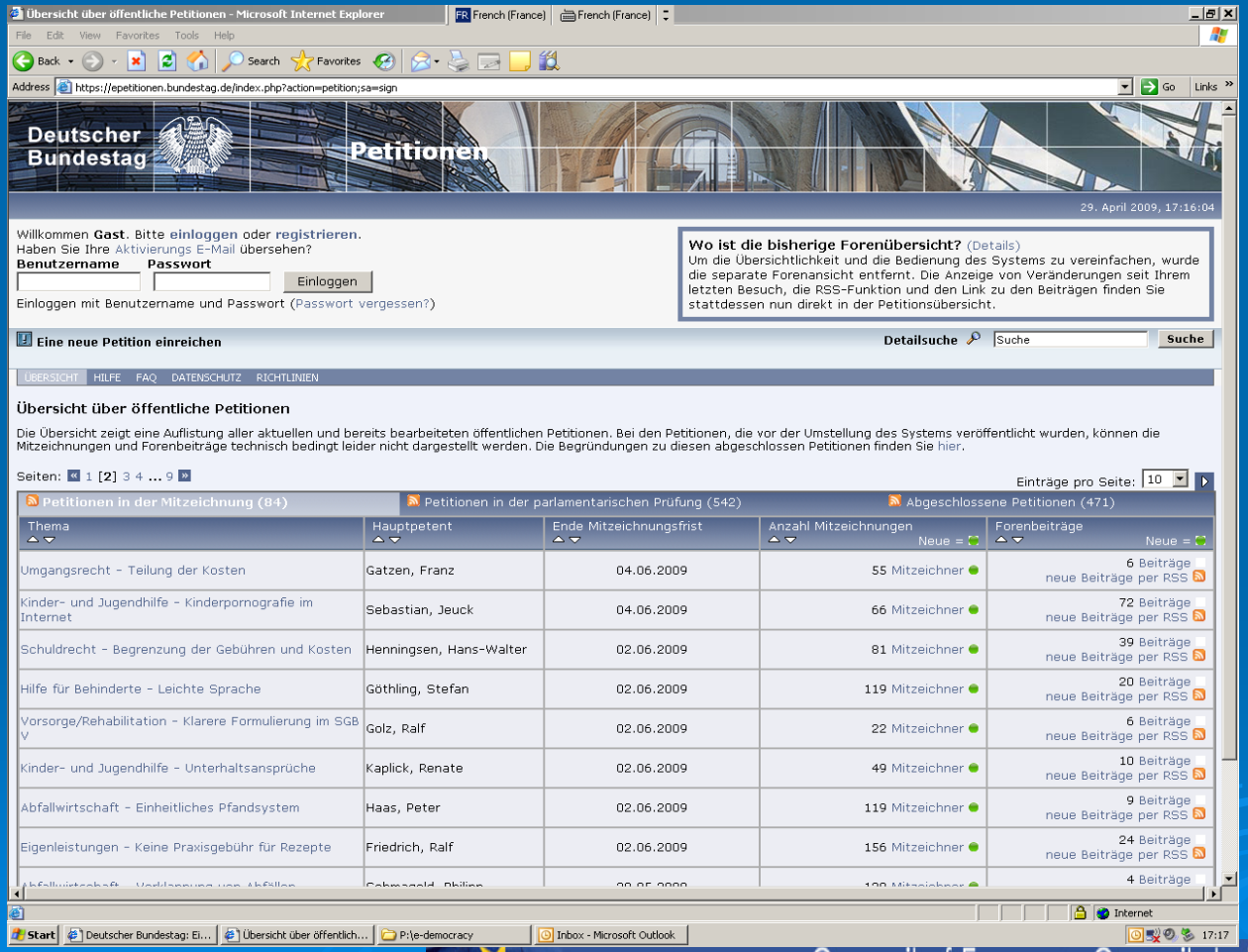
E-democracy methods

- Information Provision
- e-Neighbourhood
- e-Discussion
- Webcasts
- e-Consultation / e-participatory budgeting
- e-Petition
- e-Spatial planning
- e-Parliament / e-Legislation
- Grassroots interactivity / social networking
- e-Voting

Participatory budgetary tools and simulation games help the public gain more insight into the workings of government.



People initiate e-petitions. These tools give the public an opportunity to express its views and the politicians an opportunity to take them into account.



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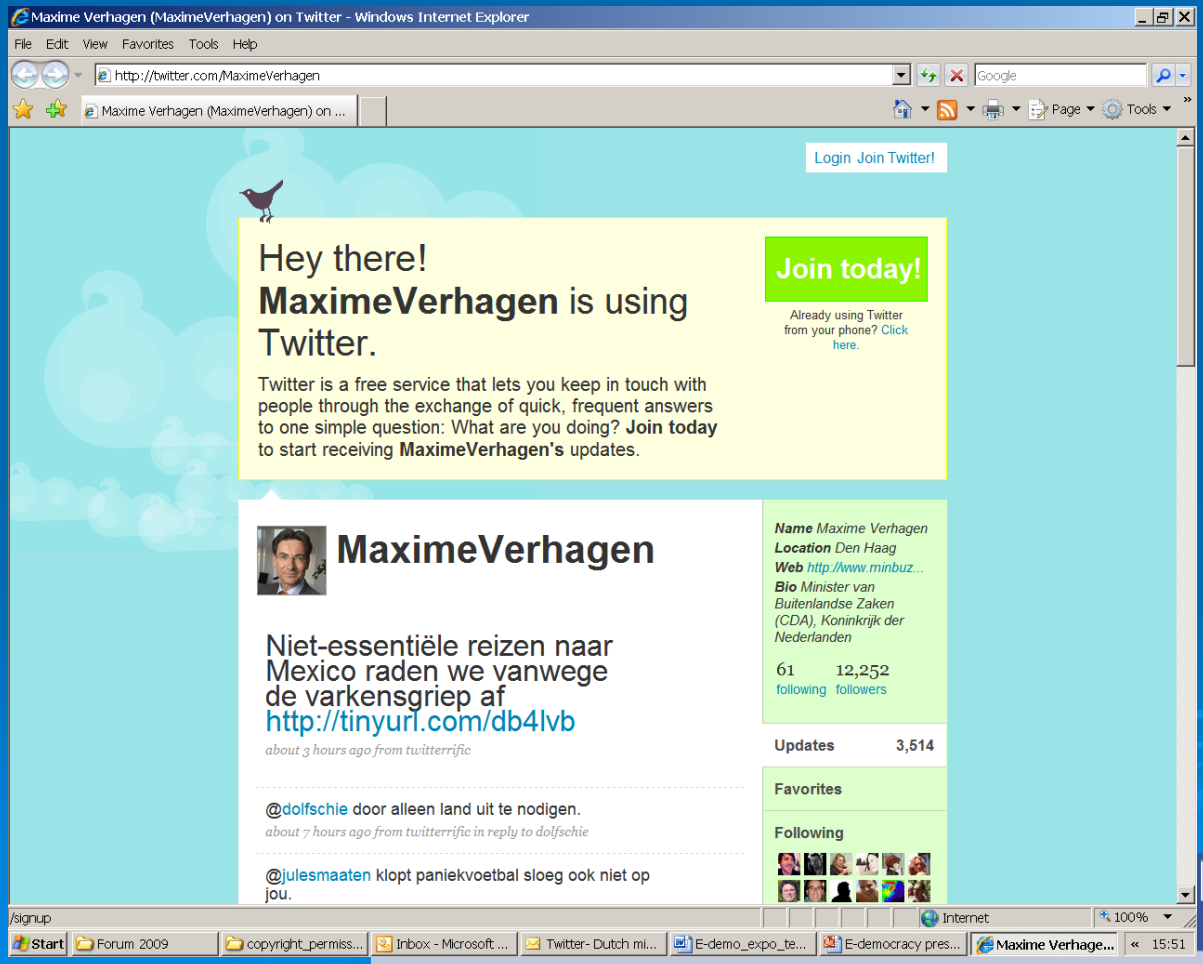
Social networking sites are increasingly used by politicians and their constituents to share and exchange information and ideas.



Voting Advice Applications (VAAs) can help you to find your position in the political spectrum

Future CoE work (I)

- Contributing to the development of e-democracy policies and strategies in member states
- Translating the Recommendation to various languages
- Seeking the feedback of civil society and e-democracy practitioners through co-operation with PEP-Net

Future CoE work (II)

- Organising biennial meetings for reviewing developments in e-democracy and the application of the Recommendation
- Mainstreaming e-democracy into general democratic processes

Danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit

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www.coe.int/democracy