

INMED Workshop, “eDemocracy and Political Communication” supported by IPSA was held in Dubrovnik, Croatia at the Inter University Center from 24 to 26 May 2010 and was organized by the Institute for New Media and eDemocracy in partnership with DEL research network (<http://www.certop.fr/DEL>)

The Workshop was part of the annual Information Technology and Journalism conference organized by the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb and the Institute for New Media. It was supported by IPSA's Research Committee 10 on Electronic democracy.

Prof. dr. Nenad Prelog and dr.sc. Domagoj Bebić of the Institute for New Media and eDemocracy and the University of Zagreb opened the conference.



Despite some last minute cancellations the Workshop was a success. Political scientists and researchers from universities in France, Italy, Finland, Croatia and the Netherlands presented very good papers and discussed the issues vigorously. All the papers presented at the workshop will be gathered and published as a special conference volume.

On the evening of the first day the participants gathered at the welcome party at the Inter University Center.



DISCUSSION

The main topic of the conference was "eDemocracy and Political Communication". This topic seems to attract people who explore connections between the two fields. Papers were presented, among other topics, on You Tube in political communication, campaigning on the Internet, blogging by political candidates, rumor bombs and talking politics online.



On the first day of the Workshop a round table was held with the topic "The relationship between e-democracy and political communication". The round table explored, among other things, how the new media impact democracy and how e-democracy could be measured. It also raised the question of credibility of eDemocracy. Are we witnessing real civic engagement or is it just PR?

The discussion also rendered some new interesting topics concerning the relationship between political communication and eDemocracy. The scientists concluded that the political activity in young people has been declining and that the new media could be an answer to this problem. First time voters could perhaps be approached or encouraged to engage through social media. After all it is now much easier to get involved actively and to produce content. The round table concluded that new technology leads to new engagement.

TIPS FOR THE FUTURE

The workshop has great potential to grow into a platform that would encourage development of eDem and PolCom research in South Eastern Europe. Therefore it is planned to invite the RC 22 Committee on Political Communication to join the conference next year.



The participants also had some free time to explore Dubrovnik with its historical monuments and enjoy the sunny weather. Founded on a rugged limestone peninsula in the seventh century, Dubrovnik is famous for its medieval walls and fortifications surrounding the entire town, its red roofs and many Church steeples, its marble-paved squares, steep cobbled streets, palaces, churches, fountains and museums - all built of the same light-color stone and facing the crystal clear and blue sea.



