



## **(DRAFT) PROPOSAL JOINT PROJECT OF EUROPEAN MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL AND THE CHARTER OF EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since December 2008 the Charter of European Rural Communities is a member of European Movement International.

On July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 Frans Ronnes (president of the Charter) and Helma van Drunen (secretary of the Charter) had a meeting with Charles Kleinermann of EMI.

They talked about the possibilities of doing projects together. This paper shows a first approximate plan for a joint project.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE CHARTER**

The Charter of European Rural Communities is an agreement between small villages from every country of the EU, with as a motto: people meet people. It exists since 1989. The Charter expanded with the enlargement of the EU and now has 27 members, one from each country of the EU.

The cooperation is based on solidarity, on all kinds of exchanges and on cooperation in projects, with the aim to advance European integration as from the basis.

The Charter grows from a twinning to a real European Network. The members learn from each other, visit each other, compare situations, organise exchanges and carry out projects together.

For 2009 and 2010 the Charter set up a multi annual project. The Europe for Citizens program of the DG Culture and Education in Brussels was meant to provide established networks of towns with twinning relationships an opportunity to embark on more sustainable, substantial, strategic and structured cooperation. For the Charter of European Rural Communities, the municipality of Haaren (the Netherlands) applied for grants in Brussels and did get approval.

Within the multi annual project there are 10 activities:

- 2 big citizens meetings with the theme: liveability.
- 2 workshops of youngsters from the Charter communities. Theme: involvement of the youth at the Charter.
- 1 workshop "friends of Europe". The Charter encourages the establishment of local Friends of Europe organisations which help the Charter municipalities to organise activities.
- 1 conference, as a start for the following 2 years, with the theme "elderly in movement"

- 4 conferences with the theme: participation in local democracy

Those last 4 conferences are the foundation for the possible cooperation between EMI and the Charter.

## **THE PROJECT**

Each Charter member will participate in one of the four conferences about local democracy. From each country 5 people will participate. Participants are a mix between politicians and interested citizens.

Basis for the conferences is a framework about how local democracy is organised in each country (the facts). During the conferences people will talk about the differences and the similarities between the organisation of local democracy. There will be special attention for citizen's involvement, not only at the level of local democracy but also on national and European level.

After those four conferences there will be an overview about how local democracy is organised in the different countries of the EU. That overview will not only show the facts about for example the number of councillors, the terms etc, but also give a strong impression about how the different municipalities stimulate the involvement of their citizens in the (local) democracy. Which methods do they use? How broad do they handle the term "local democracy"? Which people in the municipality deal with the enlargement of the involvement in local democracy? Etc.

All those knowledge and information has a great value, not only for the Charter members themselves, but also for a wider audience: European citizens and politicians.

Therefore it would be a good idea if EMI and the Charter would together organise a conference for all people who are interested in the outcomes of the conferences on local democracy.

EMI can use its network to invite (European) politicians, administrators and policy makers. The Charter can use its network to invite the politicians and interested citizens from its rural member municipalities.

Members from the Charter who played an important role in the creation and at the content of the conferences could be the lecturers / experts who share their experiences with the audience. It would be best if the program has a high interactive level.

It seems a good idea to organise the conference at the beginning of 2011, because the last of the four conferences of the Charter within the multi annual project is in September 2010. So early 2011 the results of the conferences will be bundled and the experiences of the participants are still recent.

Because the Charter has no money for extra activities, EMI should be the financial donor of this project. However the Charter will gladly make a contribution to the organisation of the conference by means of helping hands.

Helma van Drunen,  
July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009