

# The quality of Direct Democracy (DD) depends from it's design

*DD as a modern achievement and an important way to overcome the crises of democracy*

A presentation for a Mongolian delegation

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by Andreas Gross (Switzerland)

Director of the Scient. Inst. for Direct Democracy in St. Ursanne,  
University lect., Swiss MP & Chairman of the socialdem.Group in the  
Parl. Assembly of the Council of Europe

[www.andigross.ch](http://www.andigross.ch) [info@andigross.ch](mailto:info@andigross.ch)

# We should overcome the banalisation of the terms Freedom and Democracy

- ✓ Democracy enables us to be free.
- ✓ Freedom enables us to act together on our common life («Life is not a destiny»)
- ✓ Democracy constitutes the rules, rights and procedures to prevent conflicts to be solved violently
- ✓ Democracy is the only source for legitimate power

# Modern DD was not made in CH - it was only most practised in CH

- ✓ Assembly selfruling traditions in New England States 17. century
- ✓ Modern Referendum is a innovation of the French Revolution 1793
- ✓ Citizens Initiative: An innovation of french and german Radical Democrats 1830ff

# Modern DD was in CH and US an product of the opposition: By the people for the people

- ✓ Liberal founders of modern CH from 1848 were elitists - as many in many countries today again
- ✓ Many people (farmers, artisans, working class) saw themselves not represented by their parliament
- ✓ They created broad peoples movements who asked for the “last word”

**Direct Democracy is about  
people voting on issues  
(Constitut. or legislat. changes)**

**The Right to Vote on important issues  
creates a particular culture of democracy  
and changes the political and the  
communicative culture of a country  
(More substance, more alternatives, more  
differentiation, more deepness, more knowledge)**

# Direct Democracy makes politics more communicative

- ✓ Citizens will try to convince each other
- ✓ In order to be convincing they have to listen and to speak with each other
- ✓ Public Discourses get more substance
  - ✓ People see, hear and learn more
- ✓ A learning society may solve problems quicker and more in the interest of the people.

**Representative democracy is an essential part of Democracy.**

**But it should not have the monopole of D.**

**Indirect Democracy enables you to vote your representatives;**

**Direct Democracy enables you to vote on important issues you don't want to leave to your Representatives**

# The 3 cornerstones of modern Direct Democracy

- ✓ Secret vote by ballot-box, mail or internet : No assemblies
- ✓ Some citizens decide when all citizens may decide: No plebiscites
- ✓ Issues (const./legisl. Reforms): No personal decisions

# **DD is a set of participatorial citizens rights - much more than just a referendum**

- ✓ **Const.Referendum (1848)**
- ✓ **Optional legislat. Referendum (1874)**
  - ✓ **Const.pop.Initiative (1891)**
- ✓ **Treaty Referendum (1921/77/03)**
  - ✓ **legislat. Initiative**
  - ✓ **Konstruk. Referendum**

# Which are the basic (“principal”) products of Direct Democracy’s best practices?

- √ Individual. / collective communication&deliberations
- √ better informed citizens and public
- √ Increasing collective learning potentials
- √ political openness et legitimate polity
  - √ integration of diverse societies by participation
- √ Identification with the DD process  
(« Democratic patriotism »)

**The quality of the design of the process determines the quality of DD, the outcome and the quality of the side - effects**

- √ **The design of the process is essential for the «usefulness» of DD for any community.**
- √ **Each level (local, regional, national, trans-national) requires a special design**

# What DD is not:

- √ Quick fix and fast food
- √ An instrument to rule the people
- √ No consultation or public relation
  - √ No internet-forum

## How the Swiss DD might be improved:

- √ **Public financing of the political parties and active participants in Initiatives and Referendas**
  - √ **More professionalism in the parliament**
- √ **Transparency and more Fairness in the campaign rules**
  - √ **Communal democracy centres and clubs**
  - √ **More pluralistic regional and local press**
  - √ **Building of transnational (EU-) democracy**