

Sweden and its freedom of information



Since 1776, the Kingdom of Sweden has the principle of public access to official records. This means that all documents - except those under secrecy - going **into** or **out** of the local, regional and central governmental organisations are public.

Everybody in Sweden has the right to read them and act upon them.

There are two important reasons for this principle of freedom of information:

- to fight corruption and abuse;
- to enable citizens to participate in the democratic process at an early stage.

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evoice and LEX: automated document management



To handle the freedom of information for its citizens in an efficient, effective and automated way, the **Municipality of Uddevalla** - as the first public authority in Sweden - started in June 2007 with the implementation of LEX -

an automated document management system for public administrations. LEX provides citizens with information, it supports e-services and (political) decision making 24/7.



the river Bäve at Uddevalla (S)

Nowadays more and more people want to communicate with their authorities in a digital way. They expect the information and services to be available whenever they need them.

Therefore:

- citizens are enabled to follow the progress in the transaction of their applications for e.g. permits, or complaints, from day to day via the internet;
- politicians receive their information digitally at an earlier stage and are therefore better prepared when making their decisions.

LEX: towards a more open administration

LEX takes care of the whole administrative process, and handles all the municipal information: issues, documents, meetings, and subjects, like properties and registry of persons. Citizens are able to upload and download information via online services themselves, twenty four hours a day.

The LEX system consists of four components:

- document management;
- issue management;
- publishing and workflow;
- publishing and public records.



civil servants at Uddevalla receive instruction how to handle the LEX system

evoice: the multi media dialogue approach

The evoice project believes in the potential of modern ICT instruments and tools to increase citizens' participation and to access the administrative system, but only if they are employed in a well-structured, well-considered manner and over a longer period of time.

Therefore, **evoice** develops, tests and advocates the multi media dialogue approach: a combination of classic media (newspaper, radio, tv, phone, etc.) and the modern ones (internet, e-mail, chatroom, forum, sms, mms, etc.) in all phases of the policy cycle.

evoice aims to increase public influence and citizens' participation in political processes

evoice and the City of Harelbeke (B)

In December 2006, the Digital Social House, a product catalogue for social workers in the **City of Harelbeke** (Southwest Flanders, Belgium), was nominated for the Flemish ICT Award.

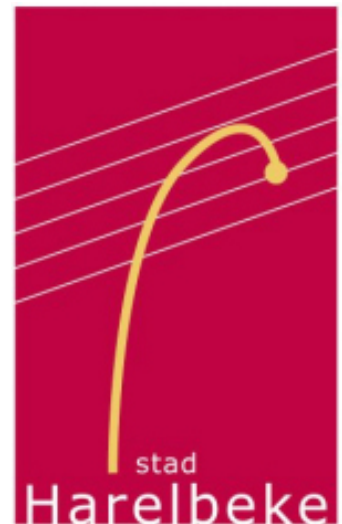
The product catalogue gives a structured overview of 'what government can do' for a customer in a specific situation (moving, looking for a job, retiring,...).

Officers from different agencies are publishing their products concerning welfare on a joint intranet, so customers can be informed about services from other agencies and administrations.

In april 2007 the initiative **Digital Social House**

about information

concerning municipal services (still under construction) was selected as a good practice, to be presented at the Belgian Conference on Quality in the Public Sector in November 2007.



| rijk aan traditie |



In the report, the jury mentioned the collaboration between different agencies on a local level, the citizen centred perspective and the willingness to learn and enhance.



new inhabitants of Harelbeke in 2002

For more information, please consult the article [Alle diensten op fiche](#), published in Trends (November 2006), unfortunately only in Dutch.



Electronic Democracy: achievements and challenges



Between November 21st and 25th, 2007, the European Science Foundation ESF - *setting science agendas for Europe* will hold a research conference on *Electronic Democracy: achievements and challenges* at Vadstena (Sweden).

This conference will be chaired by Professor Herbert Kubicek of the Institut für Informationsmanagement Bremen (ifib), a partner in the **evoice** project.

The central aim of the preliminary programme is **Electronic Democracy** or **eDemocracy** and how to identify theoretical and methodological challenges for the future research agenda by combining a top-down and a bottom-up approach.

Top-down means providing general inputs from a theoretical or methodological point of view. Bottom-up means to assess and reflect actual research in different subfields in the area of eDemocracy:

- eInformation;
- eConsultation and eDeliberation;
- eCommunities and eMovements;
- eCampaigning and eActivism;
- ePetitioning;
- eVoting.

For more information and registration, please [here](#).



The **European Science Foundation** (75 organisations from 30 European countries) and located at Strasbourg (F), promotes high quality science at a European level. It acts as a catalyst for the development of science by bringing together leading scientists and funding agencies to debate, plan and implement pan-European initiatives.

Since its establishment in 1974, ESF has co-ordinated a wide range of pan-European scientific initiatives in 10 research areas.

evoice: international European partnership

evoice is a European co-operation between:

- the **Municipality of Dantumadeel** (NL), lead partner;
- the Municipalities of **Uddevalla**, **Ale** and **Härryda** with the support of **Västra Götalandregionen** (S);
- **Norfolk County** (UK);
- **Intercommunale Leiedal**, district Kortrijk (B);
- the **Free Hanseatic City of Bremen** (FRG);
- the **Municipality of Groningen** (NL).



international European partnership

Logos and images for partner organizations: Dantumadeel, Norfolk County Council, Västra Götalandregionen, Leiedal, Bremen, Groningen, Härryda, Ale Kommun.

www.evoice-eu.net
www.interregnorthsea.org



eParticipation and the one million euro question

How can the region Zuid-West-Vlaanderen (the Kortrijk Region, B) be made more attractive for young people to live and work in?



WEST VLAANDEREN

In 2006 and 2007 a new strategic plan for the Kortrijk Region was elaborated. As part of the vision building process, a consultation initiative of young professionals was set up, called **Phare West**.



Laat je regio niet schieten!

Why young people?

Figures about the region show a braindrain of young people. However, the future of the Kortrijk Region is dependent on the motivation on young, skilled people wanting to live and work there.

One million Euro! And then?

A first step in the project was the one-million euro question: how would you spend one million euro to make the region more attractive, what kind of action would you support? More than 3000 young people filled in the online form on the website.

PHARE WEST?

In a second step of the project thirty young professionals were invited to participate in a brainstorm weekend and to write their own 'manifesto'. Local television and newspaper followed the sessions and reported about the proceedings to the broader public. The writing of the joint manifesto's was supported by a WIKI, i.e. a website for collaborative document creation.

PHARE WEST?

In a third step the main ideas that came out of the project were presented to the decision makers (politicians, senior business managers,...) and the broader public.

PHARE WEST?

Ideas like: branding the region with a new name, crosspollination: maximum use of diversity and creativity in the region, use land-art to "mark" the region,...

evoice: contact information

If you would like to get more information about the **evoice** project and its activities, please contact:

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For contact information on the project partners, visit the [who is who](#) on www.evoice-eu.net

evoice: rationale

Over recent decades interest in politics in the North Sea Region has dwindled to such an extent that the legitimacy of our elected leaders is being brought into question. Figures show that:

- fewer people are using their right to vote;
- membership of political parties has plummeted, and
- the choice of political representatives is narrowing as fewer people put themselves forward for election.

If these trends continue, the proper functioning of the democratic system could be endangered.



Our ancestors fought for their rights to vote (poster by Albert Hahn sr., 1911, The Netherlands: petition for universal suffrage). Universal suffrage for men and women has not been introduced in The Netherlands until 1917, less than a hundred years ago.

evoice: m-tool library

To support local and regional authorities and (groups of) citizens to identify appropriate ways of online engagement in eDemocracy processes, the **evoice** project presents the **m-tool library**.



An assortment of m-tools are presented in short, structured fact sheets which consists of:

- general description
- scope of functionalities
- target groups
- advantages and disadvantages
- practical applications
- applications used in **evoice** pilots
- contact persons
- examples and additional information

At the moment 6 M-tool factsheets with short and structured user information are available for:

- games
- discussion forums
- quick polls
- online surveys
- webcasting
- e-panels

eDemocracy

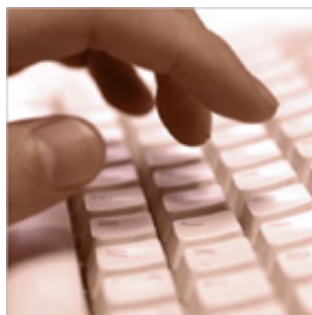
For the m-tools: **webchats**, **weblogs**, **newsletters** and **podcasts** a more comprehensive description - including, e.g., criteria to choose the software or a web-hosting service - is made available in a downloadable pdf document.



evoice: targets and aims

Despite the gloomy background described in the rationale, people are interested in single-issue traditional politics.

Building on this, evoice will combine communication channels such as local newspapers with high-tech, innovative approaches to show people that they are also effected by general politics, and encourage them to participate.



evoice takes into account local variations in legislation and regulations, culture, and the differences in style between administrators and politicians in different countries and regions.

evoice assumes that local and regional authorities are the appropriate organisations to work with to reach the evoice aims because of their direct links to the citizens.

International Political Forum on eDemocracy

In co-operation with [Hanse Passage](#), an Interreg III C project, and the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, evoice held its second **International Political Forum on eDemocracy** on Thursday, January 11th, and Friday, January 12th, 2007, in the historical Rathaus of Bremen (world heritage site).

For a short presentation of the programme, the speakers and the contents of this forum, see [evoice newsletter5](#) (page 4).

In September 2007 a DVD with the complete proceedings (keynote presentations, workshops, photos) will be distributed to the participants and other interested organisations and persons. If you did not attend this conference, but still want to receive a free copy, please inform the [evoice project management](#)



Mobile phones for youngsters: an update

In 2005, 50 interested youngsters received modern mobile phones on the condition that they will contribute to the development of a vision on the future of their village Zwaagwesteinde (NL). See also: [Heel het Dorp](#). They



could do this by submitting their (visual) contributions consisting of photos or a short footage made with their mobile phones, and

accompanying texts, to the supporting website, www.heelhethetdorpzwaagwesteinde.nl

In the past two years they presented some specific proposals:

- the construction of a half pipe for skating;
- grassplots for football training;
- a rehearsal facility for music bands.

But, they also advocated a direct dialogue with their politicians and emphasized the importance of an active policy to change the image of Zwaagwesteinde in a positive way.



A national Dutch television crew interviews a young man why his village is a good place to live in

To support their statement, the youngsters made a video clip of Zwaagwesteinde to show how great it is to live here. This clip was broadcasted by a national Dutch television channel and received a lot of attention in the newspapers.

In the late autumn of 2006, the pilot mobile phones for youngsters



has been expanded with chat sessions, based on the FLOOR approach (www.onthefloor.nl), a thinktank for youngsters, using the community website www.hyves.nl, a web 2.0 facility.