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UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL SELF
EU DEMOCRACY RALLY ACTIVITY

Objectives

- Raising awareness about one's own political biography
- Exploring socialisation and power relations
- Introduction to the topic of participation

Methods (discussion, role play, etc.):

- Self-reflection
- Discussion
- Group work or individual exercise

Democracy skills addressed:

- Self-knowledge
- Critical thinking
- Human rights
  - Article 19*: Freedom of expression
  - Article 20*: Freedom of assembly and association
  - Article 26*: Right to education

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Time format:

Between 30 and 60 minutes

Age group:

16 years or older

Number of participants:

3 to 30 participants

Necessary materials/software:

Flipchart, copy of ladder of participation (for the deepening exercise)

Sources:

Slightly adapted from: Resilience against anti-democratic tendencies through education. Handbook for Youthand Social Workers (2021), p. 16-18
www.isp.org.pl/en/publications/resilience-against-anti-democratic-tendencies-through-education

Remark:

This activity aims to raise awareness about the fact that people have different amounts of power or influence in different situations in their lives and that they may be less or more powerful than others in some areas of life. It calls for reflection on how they act in these situations, what these situations do to them, and in what ways they can influence these situations and the underlying structures. The relationship of the individual to the state, their role as a citizen, and the relationship between freedom and equality can also be consciously reflected upon.

Questions need to be prepared in advance. Facilitators should first reflect about their own political self.

Description (process):

- Participants are asked to reflect individually about the following questions (during 5 to 7 minutes), which invite to consciously reflect on one's own political self and on perceiving oneself as a political person:
  - In which situations can you influence your life yourself?
    - Within the family
    - At school or at work etc.
    - During the leisure time
    - Other: _____
  - In which situations of your everyday life do you feel self-efficient, powerful? (see above situations)
  - In which situations do you feel powerless? (see above situations)
- Thereafter, participants form groups of two or three persons and discuss their results.
- They define similarities or differences and write them down on a flipchart.
- Each group chooses a person who presents the results in the plenary.
- The results will be presented, reflected, and categorised in the plenary session.

You can deepen the exercise by asking participants to position themselves on the ladder of participation with regard to the different life situations.
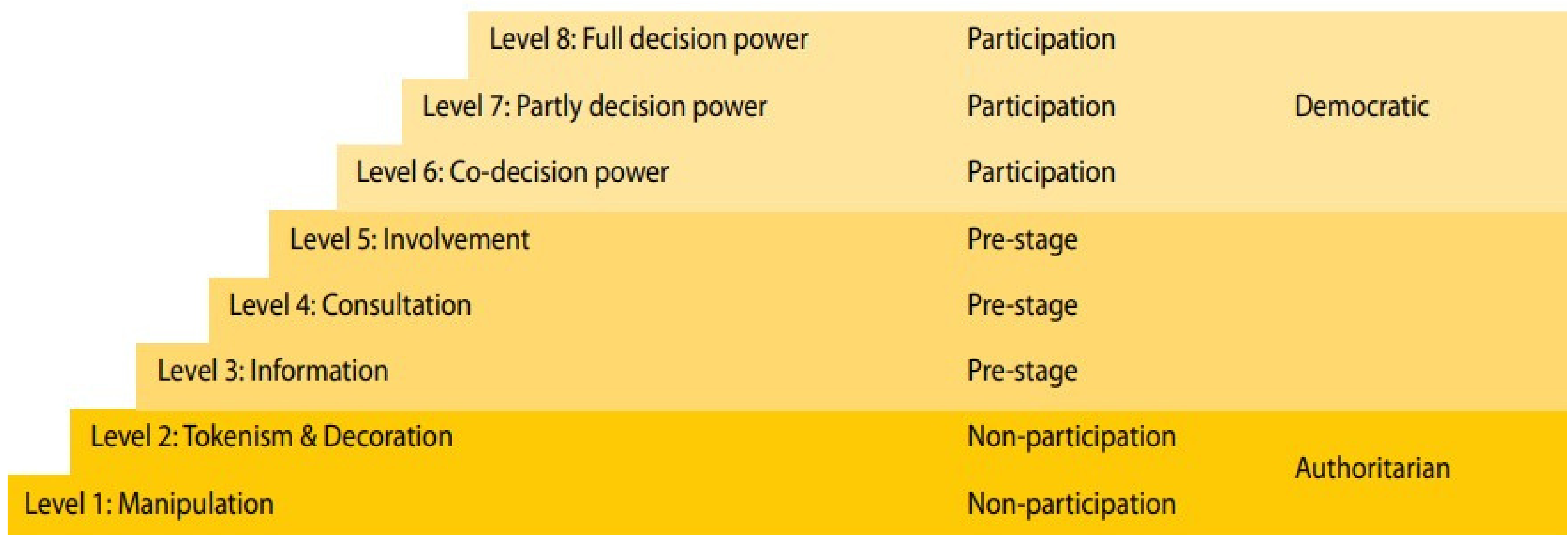
LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Graph: Ladder of participation (own, expanded illustration according to Arnstein 1969)

Level 8: Full decision power	Participation	
Level 7: Partly decision power	Participation	Democratic
Level 6: Co-decision power	Participation	
Level 5: Involvement	Pre-stage	
Level 4: Consultation	Pre-stage	
Level 3: Information	Pre-stage	
Level 2: Tokenism & Decoration	Non-participation	Authoritarian
Level 1: Manipulation	Non-participation	

The spectrum of the intensity of participation ranges from having a say to making a contribution and finally to co-responsible self-determination. Other yardsticks that are used to measure participation are "information", "consultation" and "cooperation". For young people, "being informed" and "knowledge" is essential for real participation. Being informed is a prerequisite, but it does not yet count as part of participation itself. The model of the ladder of participation is suitable for assessing the degree of the co-decision-making by participants and for determining what is meant by participation in each case.

Copy: Ladder of participation