



Reinhard Mohn Prize 2011

The problem in brief – democracy is facing significant challenges

Democracy is the core element of today's society. It forms the basis for social harmony and self-determination and places actual human needs at center stage. Thus strengthening and preserving democracy is one of the most important issues of our time.

Over the past decades, democratic systems have continuously evolved and adapted to new conditions. The following are the most pressing challenges faced by today's democracies:

■ Social inequality and exclusion

Migration and the growing gap between rich and poor mean that fewer citizens are able to participate in political decision-making processes and represent their own interests.



Citizens' Forum Europe 2009

■ New expectations for political participation

Citizens feel increasingly alienated from the political process due to the fact that traditional forms of political participation are insufficiently relevant to actual needs. Thus there is a growing preference for more direct forms of participation that address specific issues.

■ Insufficient problem-solving capacities

Society is becoming more diverse and complex, while the pace of life is accelerating. This is making it harder to react to changes appropriately and in a timely manner, to implement effective reforms and to inform the public about current issues.

Selection procedure and criteria

The search for the prize winner will be global and will involve wide-scale input from the public.

June-August 2010: People from all around the world are invited to visit www.vitalizing-democracy.org to propose, discuss and evaluate suitable projects. Proposals can be submitted through the aforementioned website until August 22, 2010.

September 2010: A total of 20 projects will be selected based on predetermined and transparent criteria and evaluations made by the public. The activities must be adaptable to the German context, as the Bertelsmann Stiftung will be drawing on these examples of international best practice as inspiration for possible future projects in Germany.

October 2010: A selection committee comprising members from all domains of society in Germany will nominate five to seven candidates.

March 2011: The Citizens' Forum 2011 comprising approximately 10,000 citizens will select one of the nominees as the prize winner.

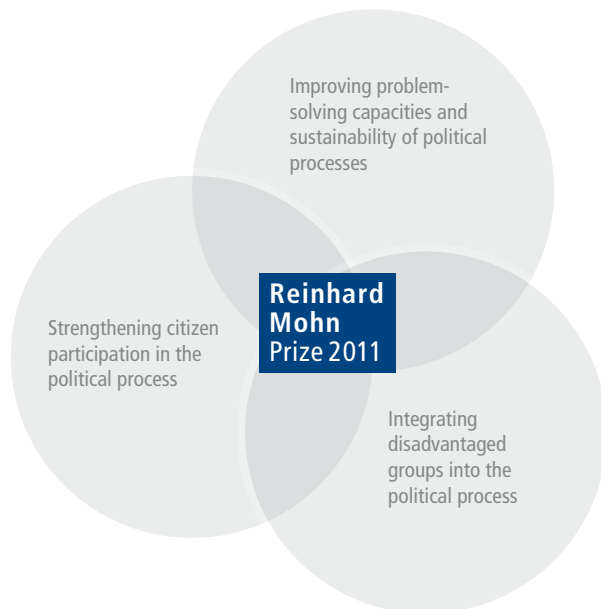
June 2011: The award ceremony will be held in Gütersloh, Germany. The individual who proposed the eventual winner will be invited to attend the ceremony.

Our contribution – approaches to vitalizing democracy

Since 1988, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has been awarding the Carl Bertelsmann Prize to groundbreaking projects in important issue areas. With the forthcoming prize in 2011, the Bertelsmann Stiftung will focus on the crucial issue of “Vitalizing democracy through participation.” The prize has been renamed the Reinhard Mohn Prize this year in honor of the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s founder, Reinhard Mohn, who passed away in October 2009.

The €150,000 prize will be awarded to a governmental institution which, on its own or in collaboration with a non-governmental actor, has carried out successful activities designed to achieve the following: vitalizing democracy, integrating underrepresented groups into the political process, and establishing new democratic approaches to problem-solving by strengthening political participation.

Focus of the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2011:



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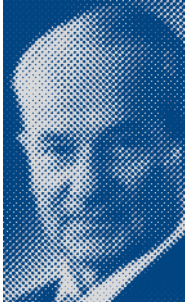
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Vitalizing democracy through participation