



**Declaration
of the 2nd European Symposium
of lay involvement in the justice system
17th to 19th July 2010 in Berlin**

1. The representatives of organizations of lay involvement in criminal and civil matters¹ – from England and Wales, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Finland, Austria and Germany at its second meeting in Berlin on 18th July 2010, conclude the following:

The participation of volunteers and lay judges in court decisions and dispute resolution are a vital element of democratic justice in the European Union and its Member and other European States. Lay judges/arbitrators are representatives of civil society and of the people in general. Their value is that they contribute experiences or special expertise from their own lives and their employment. The participation of lay judges/arbitrators and jurors, volunteer labor, social, agricultural and commercial judges, as well as arbitrators/mediators, and of justices of the peace looks partly due to centuries-long tradition. It is a political principle in Europe and in a Europe that is a principle for Europe.

2. The participation of volunteer judges and arbitrators is increasingly restricted by judicial reform, which are mainly caused by economic constraints. With concern the organizations note that so much the principle of democratic participation in state power and the effective participation of informed citizens will be sacrificed on the altar of saving policies.

The representatives of the above Organizations agreed that:

They will work closely together to:

- share information and good practices
- establish a European wide organization
- develop a Charter to outline the role of lay involvement as an essential component of a democratic society
- support and encourage other European states to establish national organizations, as appropriate, and become involved at the European level

¹ Lay involvement can mean persons acting as jurors, (honorary) lay judges and expert lay judges, magistrates, justices of the peace, arbitrators and tribunal members.