

Panel Discussion
Civic Engagement in the Canadian and German Federations
Learning from Each Other

7 September 2011, 7 PM

It is widely believed that federal political systems offer a number of advantages to citizens and individuals with regard to the protection of their interests and their cultural and political identity as well as with regard to their participation in political decision-making: federal systems offer a larger degree of political and cultural freedom and a higher level of protection against centralised decision-making and intervention. At the same time, more decisions are taken at a level of government closer to the citizens, enabling these to become better involved with policy-makers and decision-making processes. Against this general background, we are interested in discussing the Canadian and the German experience with regard to the following issues and questions:

- *What are main issues with regard to civic engagement and direct citizen involvement at the various levels of government in Canada or Germany? How can these developments be explained?*
- *How do civic engagement and direct citizen involvement affect political decision-making in both countries today?*
- *How has globalisation affected the process civic engagement and therefore nature of federalism in both countries? What can we learn from each other?*

19:00 Welcome

Rupak Chattopadhyay, President and CEO, Forum of Federations

19:10 Introductory Statement

Hannelore Kraft, President of the German Bundesrat and Minister-President of North-Rhine Westphalia

19:20: Statements

Dr. Jack Jedwab, Executive Director, Association of Canadian Studies, Montreal

Prof. Dr. Sabine Kropp, German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer, Germany

Ms. Salma Siddiqui, Vice President, Circle of Canadians, Ottawa

Prof. Gilles Paquet, Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa (tbc)

20:00 Discussion

20:20 Final Remarks

Georg Witschel, Ambassador of Germany to Canada

20:30 Reception to Follow