

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY "GERMANY'S ROLE IN THE WORLD" OVERVIEW



BÜRGERRAT
Deutschlands Rolle
in der Welt

In these times, marked by complexity, global interconnectedness, but also uncertainty and the desire for guidance, we as a society must promote democracy and keep it alive among us. Parliament and citizens must work together for this common goal because parliament's strength grows from the trust of the electorate and the accountability of the members of parliament. The greater the working link between the electorate and the elected, the greater the trust in democracy.

Lot-based citizens' assemblies can strengthen this important link. Alongside elections, opinion polls, and expert knowledge, they can enrich parliamentary work. Randomly-selected citizens' assemblies create a space where „the whole country meets at one table“. A cross-section of the population looks at the big picture and together develops recommendations around a theme.

In this process, different views and attitudes are brought together, filter bubbles are dissolved, and one's own position can be examined, questioned, and changed. At the end of a citizens' assembly, there are common positions, results, and clear answers that everyone can endorse. In the process, even the most quiet voices in society are heard, and those, who otherwise tend to shy away from politics, get involved. Citizens' assemblies give politics a compass on what to act and how, and thus assist the work of parliament.

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IRELAND – HOW IT ALL BEGAN

It all started in mid-2018 with a media report on a democratic experiment in Ireland: the magazine of the Süddeutsche published a deeply moving report on a citizens' assembly on the topic of same-sex marriage. The story is told along the personal accounts of a gay man and a homophobic man. The connection between

these two dissimilar, initially even hostile, men became a symbol for what a randomly-selected citizens' assembly can achieve: Building bridges, bursting filter bubbles, and bringing people into conversation and to common solutions.



CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES IN IRELAND

The Irish Citizens' Assembly described above resulted in a referendum about same-sex marriage in Catholic Ireland that passed with more than 60% approval, but this is only a small part of Ireland's success story with citizens' assemblies. Between 2012 and 2018, Ireland held first a Constitutional Convention (two-thirds of the participants were randomly-selected citizens, one-third politicians) and then a citizens' assembly (with 99 randomly-selected citizens). The assemblies drafted recommendations on numerous issues on behalf of the government, including 18 amendments to the constitution.

The key was that the participants were selected on the basis of gender, regional origin, migration background, age, and level of education so that they represented a cross-section of the Irish population. The selected participants met over several weekends to discuss and develop solutions in large as well as small groups, each professionally moderated. Catering, accommodation, homecare for relatives, and other necessary support was provided. The citizens' assemblies were given comprehensive and easy-to-understand information by experts on the issues that the assembly will be dealing with.

International observers were just as positively surprised by the results prepared by the Constitutional Convention and Citizens' Assembly (e.g. on voting rights, equal rights, and abortion) as the Irish Parliament itself. A large part of the results were implemented, and referendums were held on several recommendations.

GERMANY: A WAY OUT OF THE DEMOCRACY CRISIS

2018: The experience in Ireland falls on fertile ground for Mehr Demokratie and the Schöpflin Foundation. The rise of Donald Trump and politically extremist movements across Europe, combined with the steadily growing disenchantment with politics according to polls, raises questions: How do we as a society find ways out of the democracy crisis, the climate crisis, or the refugee crisis? How can we shape our future together, how can we achieve a fair distribution of resources and intergenerational justice? How do we manage to involve those who have so far not been politically active?

Lot-based citizens' assemblies promise a new form of generating ideas and bridge-building between politics and the public. Many countries are already successfully using lot-based citizens' councils, also known as citizens' assemblies. In light of this, the institutes nexus and IFOK, longtime partners of Mehr Demokratie from the citizens' participation scene, were persuaded to test this democracy experiment in Germany as well.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY DEMOCRACY MODEL PROJECT

2019: A delegation of democracy experts travelled to Ireland to meet the organisers, stakeholders, and participants of the Irish citizens' assemblies. On the basis of these experiences and months of consultation between initiators, implementation institutes, and academic advisors, a model democracy project has been developed for Germany: the Citizens' Assembly for Democracy.

Never before in German history has there been a randomly-selected committee of this size and on a federal policy issue. The project, which is self-organised and financed by donations (mainly foundation funds), started in summer 2019. At its core is a question from the current coalition agreement: should parliamentary democracy be complemented by direct democracy and citizen participation, and if so, how?



Photo: William Murphy | Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0

OVERVIEW

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY DEMOCRACY



Topic: How can democracy be strengthened in Germany? Should representative democracy be complemented?

Support and adoption of the Citizens' Consultative Report by Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble



160 participants drawn by lot at the Citizens' Assembly

Chair: Dr. Günther Beckstein, former Prime Minister of Bavaria



Evaluation by the Research Centre 'Democratic Innovations' of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt am Main



4 days of intensive debates at face-to-face events in Leipzig

1,45 Mio. Euro, supported by Stiftung Mercator, Schöpflin Stiftung



Consultation by 13 advisory boards from academia and civil society, including the Taxpayers' Association, Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND), and the Association of Towns and Municipalities.



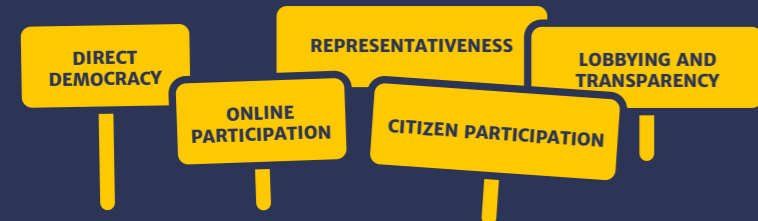
Citizens' report with 22 recommendations for the strengthening and further development of democracy

Greeting: Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag



supported by 13 experts and a 50-member organisation, moderation, and implementation team

More than 450 media responses, including the daily news "Tagesschau" and the production of a documentary film.



Individual topics: Citizen participation, direct democracy, online participation, representativeness, lobbying and transparency.



6 regional conferences with 250 participants (politicians from all parliamentary groups and interested parties)

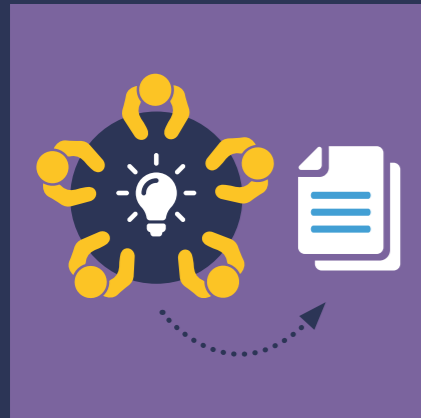
ABLAUF BÜRGERRAT DEMOKRATIE



PHASE 1 JUNI BIS AUGUST 2019

REGIONALKONFERENZEN ZUR VORBEREITUNG DES BÜRGERRATS AUF BUNDESEBENE

Zunächst wurden auf Regionalkonferenzen Fragestellungen und Themen aufgenommen, die im Bürgerrat behandelt werden sollen. Auf sechs dreistündigen Abendveranstaltungen erarbeiteten interessierte Bürger:innen und Vertreter:innen der Politik Vorschläge für die Agenda des Bürgerrats auf Bundesebene.



PHASE 2 SEPTEMBER BIS OKTOBER 2019

BÜRGERRAT DEMOKRATIE

Darauf folgte die Hauptphase, in der 160 zufällig ausgewählte Menschen aus ganz Deutschland an zwei Wochenenden Empfehlungen zu konkreten Reformen an die Politik erarbeiteten. Um eine gute und vielfältige Informationsgrundlage für den Bürgerrat auf Bundesebene zu gewährleisten, wurden dazu Fachleute aus Wissenschaft und Politik eingeladen, die über ihre Erfahrungen mit Bürgerbeteiligung berichteten. Wichtig war, dass unterschiedliche Meinungen und Perspektiven eingebracht wurden, damit die Teilnehmenden des Bürgerrats auf dieser Basis das Pro und Contra der verschiedenen Vorschläge abwägen konnten. Die Ausarbeitung der Empfehlungen erfolgte ausschließlich durch die Ausgelosten.



PHASE 3 15. NOVEMBER 2019

TAG FÜR DIE DEMOKRATIE

Die Ergebnisse des Bürgerrats wurden in einem Bürgergutachten zusammengefasst. Am Tag für die Demokratie wird das Gutachten des Bürgerrats der Öffentlichkeit und der Politik vorgestellt, diskutiert und an den Bundestagspräsidenten Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble übergeben.



PHASE 4 JANUAR BIS DEZEMBER 2020

UMSETZUNGSPHASE

Nach der Übergabe der Ergebnisse des Bürgerrats an die Politik ist eine zivilgesellschaftliche Begleitung der Politik bei der Umsetzung der Empfehlungen geplant.

Die bürgerschaftliche Begleitung der parlamentarischen Prozesse ist eine große Chance zu einem Dialog auf Augenhöhe, in dem sich Bürgerschaft und Politik begegnen und fruchtbar zusammenarbeiten können. Gemeinsam können Ziele nachjustiert, Machbarkeit ausgelotet und ein gemeinsames Verständnis von der demokratischen Teilhabe in unserem Land entwickelt werden.

EXPERIENCE: DRAWING LOTS AND THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AT THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY FOR DEMOCRACY

The first step in the Citizens' Assembly for Democracy was to randomly select municipalities from the official list of municipalities, divided into five size-classes. The share of the municipalities in a size class in the total sample of the federal state corresponded to their share in the total of all municipalities in the federal state. The registration offices of the selected municipalities were asked to draw a random sample of their citizens. They were contacted and invited to the Citizens' Assembly. The calculation of the number of participants per federal state was not based on the statistical distribution, but on the voting ratio in the Federal Council. Technically, both the selection of the municipalities and the citizens were determined by algorithms.

Of 4362 drawn, 250 registered for the Citizens' Assembly. This corresponds to a quota of 5.7 percent. From all those who registered, 160 people were selected. Participation procedures based on a lottery are considered to be particularly inclusive. But even with this method, the older age groups and the highly educated tend to be overrepresented. To counteract this, the participants were compiled from the positive feedback group. To ensure that the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics in the Citizens' Assembly corresponds as closely as possible to the distribution in the population as a whole, the following characteristics were taken into account: gender, age group, level of education,

province, size of municipality, migration background.

In most categories, the goal of representing a cross-section of the population was achieved. People without a university degree were slightly underrepresented – however, their share in the Citizens' Assembly (31 per cent) was significantly higher than their share in the Bundestag (18 per cent). People with migration experience and young people under 25 were noticeably well represented.

The approximately 160 selected people met twice for two days. They came together in plenary, received all the necessary information and then debated in small groups to which neither the experts, nor the media or politicians had access. The results were finally compiled and compared again in plenary. This ensured a personal and confidential communication framework and still maintained a connection to the whole process.

The moderator ensured that everyone had their say and that the results were pooled together. On site, the participants received all the necessary information from experts so that everyone was on the same level of knowledge. For this purpose, people with as diverse positions as possible from practice, politics, science, media or from associations were selected. The process was transparent and documented



www.buergererrat.de/dokumentation



BUILDING BRIDGES TO POLITICS



November 2019: The main ingredient for the success of citizens' assemblies is the close connection to politics – because trust in the process is directly dependent on how the results are handled and followed-up. Accordingly, it was essential for the whole process that Bundestag President Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, when handing over the Citizens' Report on 15 November 2019, pledged to expedite discussions with the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag on the proposals of the citizens' assembly: His words were: "...the approach is right and, in any case, necessary."

Various discussions followed between the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag in addition with the organisers of the first citizens' assembly. At the centre of interest was the actual format of a randomly-selected citizens' assembly. It soon became clear that one topic of the Citizens' Assembly on Democracy has a particularly strong resonance: The anchoring of nationwide

citizens' assemblies in the political toolbox of the Federal Republic. In the summer of 2020, the Bundestag's Council of Elders followed the proposal of the Bundestag President and advocates another citizens' assembly at the federal level, also to further test the format and make the Bundestag more familiar with it.

The parliamentary groups discuss Mehr Demokratie's proposals for implementation and consider various topics. The Council of Elders finally agrees on the topic of "Germany's role in the world", on which recommendations are to be presented before the end of this legislative period. The topic offers interest points for all parliamentary groups and has not yet been dealt with in the current legislative period. Mehr Demokratie promises a quick and independent implementation and Bundestag President Schäuble is taking over the patronage. Therefore, the second nationwide citizens' assembly is already launched.

MODEL PROJECT NO. 2: CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GERMANY'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Germany's role in the world – a major issue on which every parliamentary group makes its submissions and which, first of all, requires the selection of suitable experts. This demonstrates that each citizens' assembly must be structured around the core elements in a slightly different way, depending on the issue. From the very beginning, the citizens' assembly is therefore advised by Sarah Brockmeier and Dr. Cornelius Ade-

bahr, who prepared the study "Strengthening Citizens' Dialogue on Foreign Policy" for the German Foreign Office. In addition, there is a support panel of around 30 renowned experts from various disciplines who are available as support for technical and content-related questions or who can suggest experts for the citizens' assembly.



„ Ich finde, dass Bürger sich mehr an der Politik beteiligen sollten, denn Meckern kann man, aber man muss auch was machen.“

Katrin Linke, Teilnehmerin am Bürgerrat Demokratie



This is what the scientific support looks like
www.deutschlands-rolle.buergerrat.de/ueber-uns/wissenschaftliche-begleitung

OVERVIEW CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY GERMANY'S ROLE IN THE WORLD



Topic: What role should Germany play in the world in the future from the point of view of the society? What role should Germany play in various foreign policy areas? On which basis, with which approach, with which purpose, and in which regions does German foreign policy take place?



10 online events from 13 January to 20 February 2021

Preparatory phase consisting of 5 elements:

1. survey of members of parliament,
2. expert questionnaire,
3. online discussion rounds,
4. opinion poll,
5. workshop with politicians, ministries, and civil society.



Chair: N.N., enquiries ongoing



Evaluation and preparation of a handout on the citizens' assembly format by the IASS (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies) Potsdam and the IDPF (Institute for Participation and Democracy Research at the University of Wuppertal).



160 people selected by lot in the online citizens' assembly (due to the pandemic)

Supported by experts and a professional planning, organisation, and implementation team.



2020/21



Initiator:
Mehr Demokratie, in cooperation with the initiative Es geht LOS

Implementing institutes:
ifok GmbH, Institut für Partizipatives Gestalten IPG, nexus Institut

Process-supporting advice by foreign policy experts as well as by a support panel of about 30 people from different fields, disciplines and viewpoints related to foreign policy



Patronage and acceptance of the Citizens' Report by the President of the Bundestag, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble



Individual thematic complexes: Economy and Trade, European Union, Peace and Security, Democracy and Rule of Law, Sustainable Development



Results and recommendations summarised in the citizens' report, public handover to the Bundestag on 19 March 2021 in the Parliamentary Society.



Establishment of international public relations work and networking with citizens' assembly experts in Germany and beyond.

1,9 Mio. Euro, supported by

Robert Bosch-Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator, Schöpflin Stiftung, Zeit-Stiftung, Open Society Foundations



PROCEDURE

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY GERMANY'S ROLE IN THE WORLD



PHASE 1 OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2020

PREPARATION IN 5 STEPS

In order to narrow down the broad topic, various groups were involved: the parliamentary executives and members of all parliamentary groups, experts from the Bundestag and the ministries in the field of foreign policy, citizens drawn by lot (who, however, are not involved in the actual citizens' assembly) and the population via a representative survey.



PHASE 2 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY SELECTED BY LOT

In 10 online events between January 13 and February 20, 160 people drawn by lot will discuss five major thematic issues. Each person selected will be assigned to a thematic issue, which they will work on throughout the entire period. The composition of the small groups of 6-8 people alternates.



PHASE 3 MARCH 19, 2021

PUBLIC HANDOVER

In a ceremonial event on March 19, the citizens' report with the summarised results will be handed over to the President of the Bundestag and the parliamentary groups.



PHASE 4 FROM MARCH 2021

IMPLEMENTATION

The Bundestag has the opportunity to include the results in its work. It is highly desirable that the parliamentary groups take up the issues and, depending on the recommendations, bring the results to the respective expert committees. In addition, an exchange can take place about the citizens' assembly's format, its further development, and future legal implementation. The format offers a great opportunity for a dialogue at eye level, in which citizens and politicians can meet and work together fruitfully. Together, goals can be readjusted, feasibility can be explored, and an understanding of Germany's future role in the world can be developed.

RANDOMLY-SELECTED CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN POLITICS AND THE PEOPLE

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES...

- bring all of Germany to one common table
- act as a tracking device for the opinion of a cross-section of the population
- provide guidance for political decisions
- make citizens aware of the working methods and dilemmas of members of parliament
- give recommendations after comprehensive information and intensive discussion
- complement expert opinions and opinion polls
- are more representative than all other instruments of democracy practiced so far
- are less susceptible to lobbying and interest groups
- enable all voices to be heard through proper moderation
- deliver coordinated and transparently comprehensible results
- focus on common solutions instead of winners vs. losers

NEW GOAL: TO REPRESENT THE POPULATION EVEN BETTER

The random selection for the Citizens' Assembly on Germany's Role in the World proceeds in the same way as for the Citizens' Assembly on Democracy. In principle, all residents with German citizenship from the age of 16 should have the opportunity to participate. Among the 160 participants, the genders, federal states, sizes of places of origin, educational qualifications and migration experiences are to be represented as they are distributed in the overall population of Germany. This time, the selection is not based on the voting ratio in the Bundestag, but a corresponding number of people will be invited from the different federal states based on their share of the total population.

This time, in order to further increase the number of participants without a higher educational qualification in line with a sample of the population, the invitation to the citizens' assembly was also sent out in easy-to-understand language. Further services in clear language are planned in the running course of the in the course of the citizens' assembly. If necessary, technical requirements will be provided and support offered. More than 5,200 people throughout Germany will be contacted and a group of substitutes will be formed in case someone is unable to attend at short notice. In addition, this time the selection will be supplemented by outreach participation, i.e. people drawn from underrepresented groups will be specifically approached.



Details of the draw procedure

www.deutschlands-rolle.buergerrat.de/losverfahren/so-funktioniert-das-losverfahren

IN FOCUS: CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES AS A NEW INSTRUMENT OF DEMOCRACY

This time, even more than on the Citizens' Assembly for Democracy, the focus will be on the format, in addition to the subject matter: What basic rules and framework conditions should apply to citizens' assemblies? What are the opportunities, what are the pitfalls? What are the advantages and disadvantages of an online format? How is it possible to represent the population as accurately as possible and to provide the participants with information which are as balanced as possible? The second citizens' assembly can provide scientific inputs for a possible institutional-

isation of this democratic instrument at the federal level. A team of democracy researchers from the IASS and IDPF will accompany the entire process, evaluate materials and online tools, and conduct interviews with participants and organisers. In addition, the Science Department of the Bundestag is conducting its own independent monitoring. In the end, there will be fundamental findings and recommendations on the citizens' assembly format that the Bundestag can use as a basis for further discussions.



More on the scientific monitoring

www.deutschlands-rolle.buergerrat.de/ueber-uns/evaluation/

CHALLENGE: A COMPLETELY DIGITAL CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

The second nationwide citizens' assembly faces a special challenge: the Covid-19 crisis makes it difficult to hold meetings in-person and no one should have to forgo participation out of concern for their health. The initiators and implementation institutes have therefore decided to organise the citizens' assembly completely digitally. Of course, the technical requirements, a suitable space, and necessary assistance will be organised for the participants, if necessary. On the one hand, it is a drawback that the citizens' assembly only takes place online, because it is precisely the personal

encounter that brings a special quality to the process. On the other hand, this is an opportunity to expand the insights gained from the first nationwide citizens' assembly to include the aspect of online implementation. In addition, online citizens' assemblies also offer some advantages, from focused procedures to greater spatial and temporal flexibility for participants, the organising team, and experts. Digital formats that allow for personal exchange, relaxation, and inspiration during breaks are already in preparation.



Die Veranstaltung hat mich politisiert. Ich interessiere mich wieder mehr für Politik, jetzt wo ich ein Teil davon bin.“

Tim Weyrauch, Teilnehmer am Bürgerrat Demokratie



Advantages and disadvantages of online citizens' councils

www.deutschlands-rolle.buergerrat.de/aktuelles/der-buergerrat-geht-online/

CURRENT STATUS (DECEMBER 2020): THE PREPARATORY PHASE IS COMPLETE

Since the citizens' assembly cannot cover the entire field of German foreign policy, one of the tasks in the preparatory phase was to relate the main topic to different thematic fields, to identify dilemmas, and to obtain concrete proposals on how to tackle the topic. It was important to find out relevant questions and to narrow down which fields of action, values and regions the citizens' assembly should talk about. With the help of five participation modules, members of the Bundestag, experts from the ministries, and citizens were involved. The focus is on the necessity of connecting the questions with policy.

Feedback from the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag on the topic: All political groups have submitted their suggestions for topics by email.

Questionnaire to experts from the scientific field and civil society: Based on the feedback from the parliamentary groups, a questionnaire was developed to provide information on the understanding of roles, favoured topics and concrete examples. Around 50 civil society organisations with special knowledge in the fields of foreign policy, security policy, foreign trade policy, development, and international policy were invited to participate in the online survey.

Representative survey: Within the framework of a representative, German-wide survey conducted by the opinion research institute Civey, the population was asked about their main issues surrounding the topic. The questions were developed in cooperation with Civey and scientific partners.

Online discussion rounds with citizens: In four online evening events in October 2020, 23–26 citizens were

drawn to discuss which aspects of Germany's role in the world they find interesting and important. Citizens from Chemnitz, Freising, Lübeck and Völklingen were drawn. The cities represent the regions East, South, North and West and were also randomly selected.

Topic-defining workshop: Members of the German Bundestag discussed on two occasions the topics prioritised with representatives of various federal ministries and civil society. Participants included the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, Greens, Left and AfD in the Bundestag, the Federal Ministries of Finance, Domestic, Defense, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Chancellery, the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), UN youth delegates, Greenpeace, Paritätischer Gesamtverband, Forum Environment and Development as well as Misereor. The Federal Ministry of Economics, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and other civil society actors were also invited.

The implementation institutes condense and organise the results from the participation and use them to develop the concrete programme for the citizens' assembly. If necessary, the participants can adapt the programme in terms of time and content. The major topics that the participants will address as from January 2021 with regard to Germany's role in the world are already in place:

- Democracy and the Rule of Law
- Peace and Security
- Economy and Trade
- Sustainable Development
- European Union

PRINCIPLES FOR A LOT-BASED CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

- The group of participants is balanced so that there is an exchange between people who differ in terms of origin, age, level of education, etc. The more diverse the composition of the citizens' assembly, the better the results. Therefore, a lottery procedure is used via the population registers.
- The discussion takes place in alternating and randomly-selected **small groups of six to eight people**. Easy-to-understand language is used.
- **Experts** are directly involved in the citizens' assembly as contact persons and "living libraries" with different perspectives and expertise (pro-con).
- Professional teams of **moderators** support the online meetings.
- The sovereignty over the citizens' assembly's **agenda** lies with the participants themselves and can be adapted by them. If necessary, further experts are brought in.
- The **proposals** developed by the citizens' assembly are presented to all participants for an anonymous vote at the end of the assembly meetings.
- The citizens' assembly meets in a secure online room. Media coverage and observation by guests (e.g. members of parliament, ministries) is possible to a limited extent, as long as it does not interfere with the work of the assembly. There shall be no public reporting of interim results during the citizens' assembly meetings.
- The option of **public monitoring** via a streaming service is possible – however, this will be only possible in the phases of briefing the participants, and not in during the small-group discussions.
- The chair is taken by a socially recognised person who represents the citizens' assembly internally and externally with his or her competence and personality.
- An expense allowance is paid so that no one is prevented from participating for financial reasons.



IMPRESSUM

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