

Fact Sheet Institutionalisation of sortition-based citizens assemblies

In citizens' assemblies, randomly selected citizens, who represent a cross-section of the population, draw up recommendations to politicians on selected topics. In order to ensure that sortition-based citizens' assemblies at the federal level can have a lasting positive effect in practice, their framework conditions should be formulated in simple legal terms.

1. Initiation

- by the Federal Government based on a Cabinet resolution
- by the Bundestag based on a resolution from a corresponding motion
- by collecting the signatures of residents (citizens' assembly initiative)

2. Requirement for a citizens' assembly initiative

- 200,000 signatures to be collected by
 - open collection
 - any natural person (akin to the procedural principles for petitions)
- The signatures will be submitted with a question (on a clearly defined topic) and justification to Bundestagpräsidium or an independent Administrative department for citizen participation.
- The content must be within the competence of the German Bundestag.

3. Admissibility of the citizens' assembly initiative

- The Bundestagpräsidium decides on the initiative's fulfillment within one month after submission.

- Within six months, the compatibility of a citizens' assembly initiative with the Constitution is decided by the Federal Constitutional Court at the request of the Bundestagpräsidium.

4. Implementation of the citizens' assembly initiative

- In agreement with the initiators, the question of the citizens' assembly initiative can be adapted. As a guiding principle, the practical feasibility of a citizens' assembly and the resulting recommendations should be guaranteed.
- The Bundestag may implement the Bürgerrat process within twelve months
 - as its own initiative,
 - via a new administrative department to be created or
 - through contracting of external organisations.
- The Bundestag adopts the basic principles of the process (see Rules for Irish Citizens Assemblies: openness, fairness, equal weight of votes, efficiency, respect, cooperation).
- Implementation is based on the current criteria of good participation practice and innovative and agile process support.
- A citizens' assembly is financed by the federal budget.

5. Addressing the recommendations of the citizens' assembly initiative

- The Bundestagpräsidium refers the recommendations to the relevant specialist committees and establishes the responsible committee.
- The responsible federal ministries also address the recommendations and feed their feedback into the parliamentary process.
- The responsible committee shall prepare a draft resolution for the Bundestag.
- Elected representatives of the citizens' assembly have (together with the representatives of the citizens' assembly initiative) the right to be heard in the specialist committees and, if necessary, in the Federal assembly.
- The Bundestag shall, within twelve months of the delivery of the recommendations of the citizens' assembly, announce the outcome of the parliamentary process and give reasons for it.