Citizens' Assembly for Democracy: Result Overview

Over two weekends in September 2019, 163 randomly selected participants from all over Germany discussed how to overcome the discontent with politics and democracy in Germany. In its 2017 coalition agreement, the Federal Government agreed to take the following steps: "We will set up a commission of experts to draw up proposals as to whether and in what form our established representative parliamentary democracy can be supplemented by further elements of citizen participation and direct democracy. In addition, proposals to strengthen democratic processes are to be developed." This led to the central question for the Citizens' Assembly:

"Should our established parliamentary-representative democracy be supplemented by further elements of citizen participation and direct democracy?

After four days of intensive discussion, the Citizens' Assembly for Democracy presented the results below. As 6 participants fell ill over the course of two weekends, 157 people were able to take part in the vote.

1. Complement of parliamentary-representative democracy by further elements of citizen participation and direct democracy: 156/1 (voting ratio yes/no)

2. Complement of parliamentary-representative democracy with further elements of citizen participation: 148/9

3. Complement of parliamentary-representative democracy with further elements of direct democracy. 113/44

4. Complement of parliamentary-representative democracy with a combination of citizen participation and direct democracy. 155/2

5. Legal anchoring of a nationwide Citizens' Assembly. 152/5

6. Citizens, parliament and the goverment may convene a nationwide Citizens' Assembly. 153/4

7. Members of a Citizens' Assembly shall be chosen at random and shall reflect society as representatively as possible. 157/0

8. The government must be obligated to comment on recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly. 155/2

9. Citizens should be able to initiate a referendum on the national level. 148/9

10. There should be a right to veto through a referendum in the legislative process at federal level. 133/24

11. There should be the possibility of additional online voting in referendums. 107/50

12. There should be an online participation portal modelled
on that of Baden-Wuerttemberg. 135/22

13. There should be a lobby register at federal level to create more transparency. 153/4

14. Creation of a state-funded, politically independent body that
coordinates, implements and informs about citizen participation and direct-democratic
procedures nationwide. 153/4

15. Civic education should be intensified, especially with regard to democratic participation.
152/5

16. State funding for Citizen participation and direct democracy must be guaranteed. 156/1

17. Complementary third-party financing of civic participation and direct democracy is
possible and must be transparent. 118/39

18. Understandable and neutral information shall be available via different channels. 156/1

19. Civic participation and direct democracy require equal and appropriate access
opportunities nationwide. 154/3

20. Results of civic participation and direct democracy should in principle be reversible.
144/13

21. Referendums should always be preceded by a citizen assembly in order to prepare the
questions and gather information. 140/17

22. There should be an appropriate quorum for referendums. 141/15

In the pilot project, which to date is unique in Germany, municipalities of different sizes
were randomly selected and the participants of the citizens' council were drawn by lot from
their population registers. The project was initiated by Mehr Demokratie and the Schöpflin
Foundation, carried out by nexus and IFOK with the support of Mercator Foundation.

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