Proposal for a model of permanent citizen involvement in the policy-making of the German-speaking community in Belgium

Report from the international expert group to the Bureau of the Parlament der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft

08.10.2018

Introduction

In the Spring of 2018, the G1000 organization was contacted by the parliament of the Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgien (DG) asking for avenues to strengthen the use of deliberative citizen processes in its policy-making.

To this end, the G1000 and the Foundation for Future Generations contacted a number of experts on this topic - both Belgian and international - to convene in Eupen in the beginning of July 2018 to draft a potential model for citizen engagement structures in the DG. The list of these experts can be found at the end of this document.

After having talked to representatives across different political parties, this expert group has drafted this proposal for a model of permanent citizen involvement. The proposal centres around the use of deliberative processes (slower approaches which seek public judgement, rather than 'quick' public opinion) with citizens that were randomly selected from the population. It also proposes a way to make this involvement of citizens a permanent and structural part of the political process in the DG.

This document will first present a high-level model for citizen participation. Secondly, it will detail a number of specific technical aspects that are critical to the successful delivery of such a model. Thirdly, it provides an estimation of the estimated budget for this model. The document then looks at how the model would be set up in a starting phase and which major issues should still be decided upon. Finally, it outlines the principles that underpin the use of sortition and deliberation in policy-making and also looks at the specific considerations related to the DG that were taken into account when drafting the model.
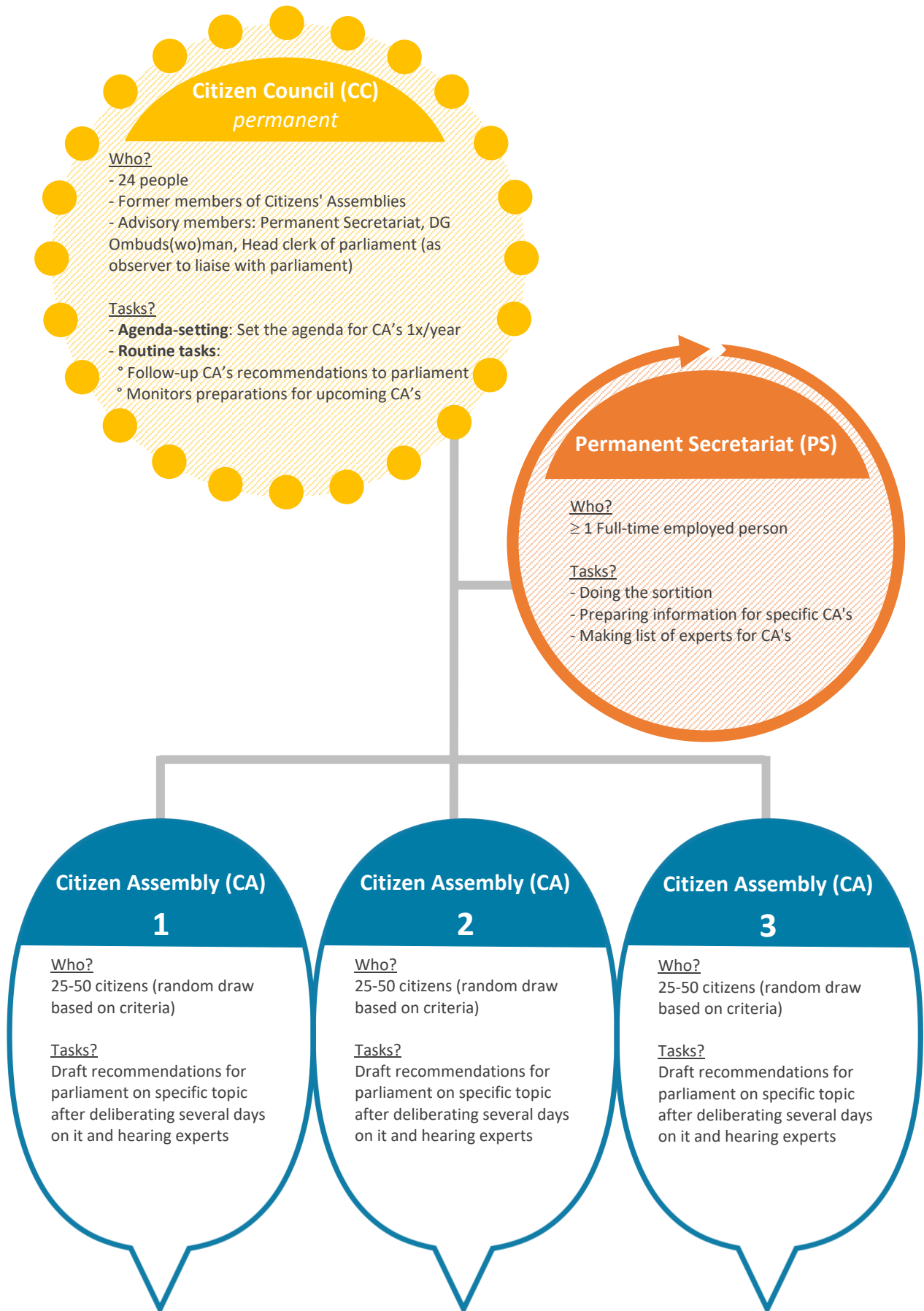
▶ The model

The model proposed by the expert group hinges on two central ideas:

1) Mini-publics or long-form deliberative processes (citizen assemblies) are the type of deliberative democratic innovation that have already been used and proven in many places around the world, including within the DG in 2017.

2) Rather than having ad hoc citizen assemblies, it is preferable that their agenda is set, and their activities followed-up, by a permanent body (also controlled by citizens) that provides a continuous and stable underpinning for the different Citizen Assemblies. Moreover, this creates a separation of power within the citizens' process where the same people do not set the agenda and decide on the content of a proposal.

The model the expert group proposes for the DG consists of three separate entities:

1) A **Citizen Council** that will decide on the topics that will be discussed by citizens in separate deliberative processes throughout the year. This Council will also follow up what is done with recommendations of past deliberative processes and prepare those that are upcoming. It is the *permanent* body of the model.

2) A **Permanent Secretariat** that does most of the logistical work to prepare the separate deliberative processes. This involves doing the sortition to select citizens for these processes, preparing the information packages for them and inviting experts. The Permanent Secretariat also provides *support* to the permanent Citizen Council.

3) Single-topic **Citizen Assemblies**. A number of these will be organized every year and will discuss one topic set forward by the Citizen Council. They will make *recommendations for policy* on that topic to the political actors in the DG.

The illustration on the next page offers a summary of each element of the model. Below it, the separate elements are described in detail.

Citizen Council (CC)
permanent

Who?
- 24 people
- Former members of Citizens' Assemblies
- Advisory members: Permanent Secretariat, DG Ombuds(wo)man, Head clerk of parliament (as observer to liaise with parliament)

Tasks?
- **Agenda-setting**: Set the agenda for CA's 1x/year
- **Routine tasks**:
  ° Follow-up CA's recommendations to parliament
  ° Monitors preparations for upcoming CA's

Permanent Secretariat (PS)

Who?
≥ 1 Full-time employed person

Tasks?
- Doing the sortition
- Preparing information for specific CA's
- Making list of experts for CA's

Citizen Assembly (CA)
1

Who?
25-50 citizens (random draw based on criteria)

Tasks?
Draft recommendations for parliament on specific topic after deliberating several days on it and hearing experts

Citizen Assembly (CA)
2

Who?
25-50 citizens (random draw based on criteria)

Tasks?
Draft recommendations for parliament on specific topic after deliberating several days on it and hearing experts

Citizen Assembly (CA)
3

Who?
25-50 citizens (random draw based on criteria)

Tasks?
Draft recommendations for parliament on specific topic after deliberating several days on it and hearing experts

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▶ The Citizen Council (CC)

This is a permanent body, but with annually rotating membership. It sets the agenda for the individual Citizen Assemblies (CA's), monitors these CA's to see whether they are run according to best practices and finally, it does the follow-up on the recommendations so that they are attended to in a timely way by parliament.

The CC has two distinct tasks:

1) Agenda setting. Because agenda-setting is a crucial role, the CC would do this in a way that differs from its normal routine meetings.

Once every year at the end of September members take one or two weekends to determine what the topics should be for the CA's that will take place in the following year. This meeting only takes place after the yearly 'state of the union' by the Minister-President (September) to ensure that the CC does not set a topic that is subsequently earmarked by the government for policy-making that year. The minimum number of CA's is to be set by the parliament of the DG, and the expert group would suggest a minimum of two per year.

The CC will set the topic in cooperation with a legal expert from the DG parliament. Both the CC and the CA's should also have access to the parliamentary services that ordinary commissions also have such as the legal service, archive, etc. - this way they can define the elements of the topic that are within the jurisdiction of the DG parliament. The questions asked should be broad and open enough so as not to constrain the specific CA in their ability to explore creative solutions to the topic at hand. The CC will take its input for this agenda-setting from different sources, but these will be suggestions and the CC is free to choose the topics it deems most important after thorough deliberation. Among the sources for this input are parliament, the government and the citizens of the DG, which can be consulted through many and varied forms of public consultation. (see a more detailed note on organizing this input later)

2) 'Routine' tasks: The CC will convene monthly to assist new CA's being set up and to follow-up past ones - monitoring the preparations for the next CA to take place. For example, the *Permanent Secretariat* (PS, see below) will present a list of experts it has earmarked for the topic and the information it will provide for the participants in the CA, which the CC will review for balance and can therefore request be changed.

Beyond this, the operating process foreseen for a CA (facilitator, sessions, …) will also be presented to the CC ahead of a CA so it can monitor that the CA will take place according to the agreed upon *standards*. The CC can also decide that a certain CA requires a larger number of participants if they feel this is needed for the topic. This could be if this is a sensitive political topic so a larger group is useful to increase the legitimacy. Similarly, the CC can decide that a CA on a specific complex topic will need more time than usual and plan this together with the PS.. The CC also monitors the yearly budget together with the PS and the impact different CA sizes and duration have on it. According to how it plans to spend this budget more or fewer CA's per year can be delivered, but there should always be a minimum number of CA's per year as agreed with parliament (as stated above, we suggest two for the DG as a minimum).

Finally, the CC will also *follow-up* the recommendations of previous CA's that are to be handled by parliament. The head clerk of parliament (who can sit as 'liaison' and advisory member) will provide information on what has been done with recommendations from previous CA's in parliament and at which stages of implementation some of these are (or why not). The CC will also follow-up that an official feedback moment is organized in parliament with the members of a specific CA. (see a specific note on how recommendations could be handled later)

Composition of the CC: The CC consists of 24 randomly-selected citizens who have been members of previous CA's.

They will be selected from the pool of participants of previous CA's, with a maximum number of years that one stays in the pool (e.g. after 3 years one is removed from the pool). The membership in the CC rotates, where one third (i.e.8) of the members change every four months. This means every member sits for one year on the CC, but every four months there is a change in composition. This ensures that there is stability in the working of the CC, but also that the limited term means that citizens on it do not become entrenched in their role. Having very long terms would mean that they become too socialized in their role, not unlike elected politicians, and lead to a concentration of power in the hands of a few citizens. Long terms also make membership of the CC too heavy a burden for many citizens and thus impair recruitment.

The rationale for having members of the CC drawn from previous CA members is because they will already have a clear understanding of the process and the workings of CA's from their own experience. This allows them to be more efficient and insightful in monitoring and following-up CA's. If CC members had never sat on a CA themselves, they would have to rely on others to get acquainted with how a CA works rather than having an in-depth understanding of what this entails from the outset.

In the first year, as a transition measure, 6 members would come from each of the parties represented in the DG parliament and the others from the mini-public held in 2017 (see specific note 'set-up period' later).

The CC has as non-voting members the member of the permanent secretariat (see below), the Ombuds(wo)man of the DG and, for its relationship with the parliament, the head clerk.

▶ The Permanent Secretariat (PS)

This consists of at least one permanent employee. The PS is responsible for organizing process logistics, and coordinates the content of the CA's in several ways. The person holding this position should therefore, ideally, be highly knowledgeable about participatory and deliberative processes, and capable of understanding the many kinds of bias. Because the PS plays such a central role, it is important that it has an independent and neutral position. This could be achieved by having this person work for example under the office of the ombuds(wo)man of the DG.

The PS is responsible for:

- the management of the sortition process to assign members to a specific CA. This is the organization of the recruitment and lottery itself (see a technical note on this later in the report).

- Sending out invitations, following-up replies and responding to queries. This also includes helping potential participants with practical issues such as sorting out their travel, childcare etc.

- Basic logistics aspects of organizing the CA's: providing rooms, catering, etc.

- Recruiting the facilitator(s) to a specific CA. This needs to be done with great care as these are crucial to having a high-quality deliberation process[1]. One could even institute over time a form of accreditation by the PS for facilitators for CA's in the DG.

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[1] This was also very much stressed by the participants in the Bürgerdialog organised by the DG parliament in 2017. All research points at high quality facilitation as crucial in deliberative processes.

- Preparing and managing the yearly budget. This is the budget for specific CA's and for the annual budget for the CC. The CC supervises this budget and the PS reports at regular intervals to the CC.

Beyond these logistical tasks, the PS coordinates the preparation of information and documentation for the specific CA's. This includes asking various diverse stakeholders for input, balancing views and ensuring that all perspectives on the topic at hand are available. This involves setting up an ad-hoc advisory group for every CA (see specific note on this later). The PS is also responsible for reviewing the final program with balanced questions and methodology to be used by the facilitators for the CA's. It also involves preparing a list of experts and stakeholders that will come to talk to the CA.

Because the PS holds a crucial position in the organizing of the whole process, it is necessary that the CC is involved when this person is appointed or when the person holding the position is replaced. The CC monitors the work of the PS to see that it holds to a strong standard of neutrality and impartiality.

The work of the PS is very important and requires a good knowledge of how deliberative processes are set up. The person that will hold this post will therefore need excellent skills and be knowledgeable on this. But the G1000 organization has also foreseen in its current planning and budget that it would assist and monitor the process developing in the German speaking communities for the next two years. This will also include giving advice to the PS in the first two years.

▸ The Citizen Assemblies (CA)

These are single-topic citizen assemblies that bring together a minimum of 25 citizens for a number of days, at least for four to six days depending on the complexity of the topic.

As stated above the topic is decided by the CC. The CA's are professionally facilitated and deliver a set of recommendations to the parliament of the German-speaking community of Belgium.

The citizens in each CA are drawn by lot (see further on in this report for technical details on this) and are remunerated for their time. The topics that they can discuss are *a priori* limited to the policy areas in which the DG has its competences[2].

A CA will propose recommendations to the parliament of the DG on the topic it was given to discuss. There should be a clear regulation as to how these recommendations will be handled by parliament. The extent to which they are seen as binding[3] to some degree is up to the political actors of the DG to decide, but the most important element that previous experiences with CA's tell us is that expectations should be clearly set at the start of a CA and should be kept after it. A separate note below goes into possible ways parliament can work with these recommendations.

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[2] It is possible that some of the ideas or recommendations from a CA are related to the topic but not in the strict competencies of the DG. With the amount of policy competences in Belgium straddling across community, regional and federal level this will often be inevitable. Both during the discussions and in the final report these should nevertheless clearly be delineated from each other. Focus should first all be to discuss all the elements within the topic that are part of the DG competencies and where policy recommendations to parliament or government can be made.

[3] It is clear that from a legal perspective, a parliament can never be 'bound' sensu strictu by a citizen assembly. The way we use the term here is as an intention that the parliament has given itself to use the recommendations to enact them in its own work. The Council of the State has on many occasions stated that direct democratic instruments such as referenda are not allowed because of art 33 of the constitution and that representatives cannot be bound when they take decisions, neither by a rule or de facto. See for example this excerpt from the ruling 46238 from 2009 (page 2):
"Le système représentatif ainsi instauré par la Constitution implique que les représentants de la nation prennent eux-mêmes les décisions dans les matières relevant de leur compétence et que, dans l'exercice de leur mandat, ils ne peuvent être liés, ni en droit, ni en fait."

Although there are some differences in how a CA is set-up practically, it is important that there will be clear regulations as to how this is done for this model on a more permanent basis. If rules for CA's are changed ad hoc depending on the topic at hand, this could harm the credibility and also make it a prey for future political bargaining. Of course, elements such as the number of days a CA deliberates and the number of members for a specific CA can depend on the topic. This is decided by the CC within the yearly budget.

Elaboration of specific elements

Processing the recommendations of CA's

One of the crucial points in the whole model will be how the recommendations of a CA will be processed by the competent authorities in the DG: Parliament and the Minister responsible for the policy area that a CA discussed. There is no fixed rule to be set here, but it is important for this process that citizens have confidence that their recommendations will be followed-up in a pre-agreed way. If citizens go through this whole process and nothing is done with their work, this will likely have a negative influence on civic trust in politics (in literature this is often labelled 'pseudo-participation'). Given previous experiences with CA's by members of the Expert group, we give a number of suggestions:

a) **Minimal ambition**

   The recommendations are discussed in the commission of parliament responsible for the policy area in presence of the minister responsible of that subject. There is a formal written response to each recommendation that explains what follow-up is planned. When the decision is taken to disregard a recommendation even though it is in the competences of the DG, a reason needs to be provided as to why the authorities decided to not follow the recommendation of the CA. The CC follows up to ensure that for those recommendations where a follow-up is promised, this is actually done (This is close to what the Tuscan law on participation prescribed).

b) **Medium ambition**

   There is not only a written response to the recommendations as above, but that a common session between the CA (or a number of designated members of the CA) and parliament needs to be tabled a number of days after a CA has laid down its recommendations. During this session, a discussion takes place to explore the follow-up that is suggested by parliament in the written document. This is a public session where members of the public can contribute to these debates.

c) **Ambition recommended by the G1000**

   The recommendations would get a specific status if they are supported by a large share of the CA members. If that is the case, the CA with assistance from the juridical service of the parliament would see how the recommendations can be versed into a decree proposal. This proposal then goes to the bureau of the parliament and is eventually put to a vote.
   As for the minimal amount of support necessary for this process to be activated and parliament to feel obliged to follow the recommendations, we make the following suggestion. International experiences (in Poland and Australia) work with a high threshold where they require 80% of the group to support the recommendations for this kind of quasi-mandatory follow-up to happen. The reason is to ensure a high level of consensus among the group and reflect broad societal support, which requires high-quality deliberation. It is possible to set this threshold to 2/3 (66,67%, like a constitutional majority in Belgium) but in this case the deliberative citizen process resembles rather traditional political decision-making. In the first two years, we suggest to set the threshold to 80% and to let the CC evaluate this practice by the beginning of the third year.

▶ Managing "lobbied" input to the CC

One of the important tasks of the Citizen Council will be one of agenda setting: agreeing the topics for the Citizen Assemblies to be held over a year. It is therefore important to set down rules on how the input towards the CC is done to suggest topics for a CA.

Although the expert group would suggest that this is kept as open as possible, a number of rules could be set to avoid problems. For citizens the threshold should be low, but not setting a threshold at all might lead to a large number of proposals that have no minimal level of support[4]. These then need to be treated by the CC anyway, leading to a large amount of case work[5].

We would therefore suggest a low quantitative and qualitative threshold. As a *quantitative* threshold, one could say that at least 100 citizens need to be behind a proposal for it to be tabled by the CC on the agenda-setting meeting. An online platform could be used to do this. What is more, it is advisable to avoid that some of these become popularity contests as this could make them liable to political influencing. A suggestion would be to stop the counting of support as soon as the threshold is met. As a *qualitative* threshold, it could be that a minimum of information needs to be provided to submit a proposal. One could think of a form where next to the topic of the proposal one page needs to be submitted detailing it and why it is deemed a suitable topic for a Citizen Assembly.

For politicians a similar qualitative threshold can be used. One could also limit the number of proposals a single politician or party can put forward (ten for example).

The CC remains completely free to choose which of the topics it finally chooses. It is also free to evaluate the working of the input system after each year and to amend it.

▶ The information provided to Citizen Assemblies

The usual practice to set up a Citizen Assembly is that an advisory group is formed in an oversight capacity. This group is composed of the relevant stakeholders to ensure that there is a balance of information and experts presenting perspectives on the topic. It is composed of 6-8 people knowledgeable in the theme, bringing complementary viewpoints and/or political backgrounds.

The PS would set up such a group for every CA to be held. Every month the PS reports to the CC the progress of the preparation of a CA, including the composition and working of the advisory group. After the advisory group has given their input, the PS prepares the information package for the citizens in the CA to give them the necessary information to discuss the topic and make recommendations after the deliberation. This is done in close collaboration with the departments of the DG responsible for that policy area, so the PS can rely on their expertise in the topic at hand.

Setting up the first CA after the agenda setting meeting will therefore take a number of months and it is very likely that the first CA will not take place before January. If the number of CA's is three per year, there are two options following the first CA. The first option is that the subsequent CA's are all held before the summer, but this might stress the agenda of the different bodies too much, especially since for budgetary reasons the PS only has one full time equivalent employee. A second option is to hold the last CA of a year in September. As the tasks of CC and CA are not immediately related while a CA is held, it is not problematic that it coincides with the agenda-setting of the CC for the next year.

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[4] The City of Madrid encountered this problem in the first iteration of their website for citizen input for city policy where about 6000 proposals were entered, most often poorly prepared topics by individual citizens.

▶ The random selection (sortition) of citizens

The complexity of a sortition model hinges to a large amount on two (related) factors:

1) <u>On which categories you wish to stratify the selection</u>

In most cases we have seen around the world, the stratification is done across four base categories: age, gender, geographical location (which in the DG could be the 9 municipalities) and diversity of social class (or some proxy for ensuring 'all walks of life' are represented: e.g. educational level). These criteria exist to ensure the CA has a high level of diversity and is descriptively representative of the population – that everyone can see *"someone like me"* in the group. It is further possible to have reserved place(s) for some very specific groups in a society, typically hard-to-reach minorities.

To obtain the relevant information from potential attendees typically a two-stage process is undertaken. First, invitations are sent to a very large random selection of people (several thousand) and the relevant data is collected from those who respond, and then a second stratified random selection is performed, using a software tool, ensuring that the specified criteria are met within certain narrow limits (or exactly, if possible). The first stage can be done once a year and that pool is used to draw participants for the separate CA's. There should also be a draw for substitutes to replace any member of the CA that withdraws from the process (although this could also be done on an ad hoc basis, when and if a CA member withdraws). The PS is responsible for this.

2) <u>From which population or data set you perform the selection</u>

The second factor, which has both legal and practical implications, is from which population (data set) the initial selection is done.

The National Register could be used for the first random draw, but must, of course, be done within certain legal constraints. Another possibility is to use the registers for local/EU elections, held by the municipalities. Depending of the decision of the DG as to whom can be a member of the CA's (only citizens, or all residents irrespective of citizenship) other registries might also be needed, such as the Register of Foreigners and the Register of those in Waiting Statute.

There are, of course, privacy considerations concerning any use of residents' data, and most likely a request should be submitted to the Privacy Commission four months ahead of the collection or use of any data.

▶ Budget

The budget below for the proposed model is highly provisional as several decisions that still need to be taken will strongly influence the final budget. The level of the remuneration of citizens for example will be one influence, as will be the number of CA's organized per year. Below we give an estimate of a budget for the three different elements of the model. We also give the 'spread' based on changing parameters (most notably, the per diem). It needs to be emphasized that these are general estimates.

Citizen Council (CC)

CC 24 persons	number	days	price/unit	TOTAL
1 weekend agenda-setting				
Facilitation	1	2	600 €	1 200 €
Logistics				
Travel	24	2	25 €	1 200 €
Food	30	2	50 €	3 000 €
Accommodation	4	2	100 €	800 €
Per diem for 24 persons	24	2	50 €	2 400 €
Online survey	1	1	3 000 €	3 000 €
Sub-total CC agenda-setting				**11 600 €**
8 days regular work				
Logistic				
Travel	24	8	25 €	4 800 €
Food	30	8	25 €	6 000 €
Per diem	24	8	50 €	9 600 €
Sub-total CC regular work				**20 400 €**
Total CC				**32 000 €**

The largest cost by far to run the Citizens' Council is the per diem for the citizens. Here it is put at 50 € per day per citizen leading to a budget of 32 000 €. If this per diem is brought to 100 € the budget goes up to 44 000 €. The two other main items on the CC budget is facilitation for the debates during the agenda-setting weekend and the cost of running an online survey for input from citizens for CA topics.

Citizen Assembly (CA)

CA (25 persons 4 days)	number	days	price/unit	TOTAL
Per diem	25	4	50 €	5 000 €
Facilitating	1	10	1 000 €	10 000 €
Catering	30	4	30 €	3 600 €
Experts (travel, hotel)			1 000 €	1 000 €
Venue			available	1 €
Lottery process			PS	1 €
Transport	25	4	25 €	2 500 €
Translation				1 000 €
Total for 1 CA				**23 102 €**

This estimate is counting a CA to take only two weekends and to have 25 persons and the per diem for citizens is at 50 €. In this case the highest cost is for facilitation. From the experience of the experts in holding these kinds of deliberative processes and from research we know that that good facilitation is <u>crucial</u> to high-quality outcomes of citizen assemblies. We think that ten working days for the facilitator - which include a number of days preparation – are minimally needed to hold a four-day citizen process. Next to this the per diem for citizens is again the highest cost. We calculated no cost for logistic elements such as the venue and audio or projection material as we assume these will be provided by parliament and this reduces the cost. This brings us to a cost of 23.102€. If the per diem for citizens is put at 100€ then the budget goes up to 28.102€. This is less than most of the examples of citizen assemblies of which we know the budget in other places, but part of this is due to the fact that the permanent secretariat will take up many tasks that are part of the cost for a CA when they are organized ad hoc.

In the long run it might be possible to train facilitators for the DG and reduce that cost somewhat, but this is a very important role and so in the short to medium term existing professionals should still be relied upon. This estimate is for 2 weekends with 25 people and a more complex topic might mean that a CA lasts longer or has more participants (the Canadian Citizens' Assembly in British Columbia in 2004 for example to reform the electoral system was held over 15 meetings whereas the national Irish Citizens' Assembly took 5 meetings to discuss abortion).

If we take the highest estimate for the per diem (100 €) a combined cost for the CC and holding one CA would amount to 72.102 euro. For the CC and two CA's it would be 100.204€, for the CC and three CA's 128.306€. This is counting all CA's to be two weekends and 25 participants. If all the expenses are counted that go to citizens (fee, transport, catering…), this amounts to about 75% of the cost of running the CC and CA's.

As previously suggested (above) when discussing the role of the CC in setting up CA's, an 'envelope' sum could be provided every year to the CC, which it then uses to organize CA's. In a year where there is no topic that needs a CA with more participants or more weekends the budget would allow for more regular CA's. If a very important or complex topic needs to be handled, the CC could then decide to have one CA less, but hold a more expensive large CA to deal with this matter. It is of course up to the parliament and authorities of the DG to decide upon this budget.

Permanent Secretariat (PS)

Permanent Secretariat	yearly
Website	3 000 €
Office	1 €
Digital database	1 000 €
Printing and postage	5 000 €
Office support cost (phone, computer…)	10 000 €
1 Full-time equivalent staff	pro memoria
Support and advice from G1000	1 €
Total for PS	**19 002 €**

Next to the cost of the CC and CA's, we would budget an operational cost every year of about 19.000€ for the PS. It is assumed here that this person can work in an office provided by the DG parliament and so the cost for office has been put at a symbolic 1 €. We calculate 10.000 € for office support, but it is possible this is also less when provided by the DG parliament itself. The G1000 will act as an expert consultant to assist the PS in its first two running years, but it will do this using its own means. Finally, it needs to be noted that a full-time employed person will need to be hired by the parliament to fill the position of the PS.

The proposed model above describes its functioning when it is fully up and running. What steps are needed to get there?

In October 2018 this paper is presented to the parties in the DG parliament. As there are elections in mid-October, no political activity is foreseen in that month.

A consensus should be reached between the parliamentary parties by December which would allow for a start-up in 2019. The first step should then be to hire the civil servant who will be in charge of the Permanent Secretariat by March 2019.

In May 2019 there are elections for the DG parliament, so again we do not expect much political activity. It would nevertheless be good if every party that has agreed to set up a permanent citizens' deliberative institution *also* supports this in their manifesto. This would be a strong signal that this has cross-party support.

In June 2019 a first Citizen Council could convene. As there are no CA's yet from which to draft members, a transitional CC would be set up. This could consist of 18 citizens, a number of which are drafted from the citizens in the 2017 Bürgerdialog and a number from civil society or drafted by lot from the whole citizen body. The remaining 6 seats would be for a representative of every party in the DG parliament[6]. These latter members would only sit for a short transitional period until the first batch of citizens from a CA can be selected.

The first meeting of the CC (June 2019) will be in preparation for their September meeting - which will be the first agenda setting meeting of the CC. They should also consider how to get input from the broader population for the first CA. They convene again in September after the State of the Union speech of the government to set the agenda for the CA's for that "political year".

In January 2020 the first CA under this new system should then take place. In March the CC can evaluate the first CA (which should be done after every CA) and prepare for the follow-up with parliament. In April the six politicians disappear (together with two non-politicians) from the CC and are replaced by citizens. In April-June they prepare the agenda setting, which this time would involve a broader public consultation.

From September 2020 the system should run in its 'normal mode'. A first evaluation of the whole model should be undertaken in April 2021 when the CC and CA have been active for about one and a half years. This evaluation includes external experts, the CC and members of the CA's that are consulted on their experiences.

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[6] Given that the May2019 elections return 6 parties to the DG parliament. Otherwise the numbers here are adapted to the number of parties after those elections.

It is not up to the experts to limit what parts of the model are 'off limits' for amendment by the political representatives in parliament. We can enumerate a number of points here on which a decision is still needed even in the event most of the model above is taken up.

- ***Who can be a member of CA's and the CC?*** There are strong arguments to be given to include all inhabitants of the region as potential members of the CA's and CC, but equally an argument can be made to restrict these to the official Belgian citizens who are residents of the community. Although members of the expert group have their own preferences and arguments on these, it is up to the political representatives of the DG to decide which group the CA and CC should represent and hence hold as members. Another possible consideration is to lower the threshold for membership to 16 years instead of 18. The parliament should also identify which groups would be hard to reach in the DG and have specific targeted recruitment processes.

- ***How to remunerate citizens?*** What is the baseline remuneration per diem for a citizen and how will it be organized? The per diem will make up a significant proportion of the cost of CA's and the CC, so the level at which this is set will have a considerable influence on the total budget.

- ***How many citizens is appropriate for each CA?*** Given the criteria, this expert group has put forward 25-50 citizens as a good size for a CA to have a high-quality deliberative process. We have stated before that for topics that have a large impact or are political sensitive a higher number is advisable[7]. We strongly recommend that the minimum number is set at 25, but that the CC is given the authority to set the needed amount of citizens when it considers this necessary.

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[7] We can think here of examples such as the process preparing the abortion referendum in Ireland (2017-2018) or the deliberative citizen process on storing nuclear waste in South Australia (2016)

After having proposed the model, we also briefly summarize here the reasons behind the increasing use of deliberative processes in established democracies.

Democracies all over the world are looking for new ways to strengthen their institutions, create greater confidence in public decision-making and increase the participation of citizens in policy making. This can be done in many ways, but increasingly these innovations converge around a specific way of having citizens involved in the political process: long-form deliberative processes with participants drafted by a form of random selection (sortition). Why is this model so powerful and is now taken up in many countries at different political levels[8]?

First of all, there is the representative quality of sortition.

Democracies have of course used many different types of citizen participation in the past. The central weakness with most of these existing types of participation (such as public hearings or townhall meetings) is unfortunately the "self-selection of participants". This means that it is completely left up to citizens to become informed about participation opportunities and to be a part in these. This requires a high level of personal engagement and motivation to do this. Decades of research have shown us that this leads to only a very select and specific group in society participating in politics if it is organized in this way. This group of so-called 'typical participants' or 'usual suspects' has certain characteristics that make them unrepresentative of the total citizen group. In many cases they are quite similar to those of elected officials: they hold a university degree, are male (although this is changing in several countries), and rarely includes younger adults. Minorities are also underrepresented in these types of participation.

So, although you do have people who will participate in their free time, the positions they represent will still often not be those of the larger population. Politics will still not feel representative to those not belonging to these groups, which is a majority of the citizens. Sortition done well solves this problem. Here a group is taken from the citizen population as a whole. Moreover, the group that is selected must be descriptively representative for the population on a number of criteria such as age and gender. This means that groups that would normally not be participating in politics will now be well represented when decisions are made in a participatory process. How this is done is described in the 'sortition' section above. This will increase the legitimacy of those decisions as they now are taken by the citizens as a collective rather than by or for a subgroup of these.

The second powerful element is that of quality deliberation.

Politics is often portrayed as a struggle between different ideas, with one of them "winning" in the end. This often leads to strong polarization and a bias towards negativity and confrontation between those involved. Even in societies with multiparty systems that have a tradition of coalitions and consensus, the framing is still often about which party 'got most out of' a political decision or negotiation. Moreover, as representative organs such as parliaments have a fixed number of seats, politics is a zero-sum game: a party can only win more seats if another one loses those seats. A positive attitude towards the other political parties in policy discussions is therefore often a detrimental 'strategic choice' when considering the upcoming election.

Deliberation with randomly selected citizens avoids many of these problems. First of all, citizens come without a platform on which they have been elected, nor will they have to stand for re-

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[8] The answer to this question will only be taken up very briefly here, there are more arguments to be given, but we will limit ourselves to the two main arguments.

election. This means they have no real strategic incentives when hearing information on a topic or taking a decision on an issue. They will not be 'punished' in an election or criticized by the media for moving away from the "party line" if they change their mind after discussing new or better information on a topic.

These citizens of course bring their own opinions on a subject into a deliberative process. It is that diversity that makes them representative[9] of the wider citizen group. Managing these diverse opinions is also where the "qualitative" element of deliberation comes in: for deliberation to lead to good outcomes, it needs to be set up according to high standards. One of the elements of this is the use of very skilled moderators to make sure that the more confident and charismatic citizens do not dominate the discussions. Good facilitation is also needed to guide the process towards a decision that is informed and reflects the citizen group.

Another important element is that the group is presented with balanced information about the topic and hear different experts and stakeholders on the topic. There is ample evidence that when these conditions are met, citizens are very capable of coming to informed decisions about sometimes very complex problems (ranging from storing nuclear waste to gay marriage to city planning and water-management).

Given the current increasing discontent with traditional political processes, high quality deliberative processes with a citizen group composed through sortition can lead to policies which better represent informed citizen preferences and can therefore often lead to more legitimate outcomes. If such a process is made a permanent feature of a political system, it can re-invigorate that political system and rekindle the trust citizens have in it and the decisions it takes. This is something that is lacking at the moment as almost all known indicators show in most European countries.

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[9] In some cases processes also use opinions measured ahead of the random selection to select participants to make sure there is a diversity of opinions in the citizen group.

▶ Considerations used in drafting the model for The German-Speaking Community

Just as representative democracies still have different institutional structures, sortition-based deliberative democracy can be organized in different ways. Here we review some of the features of the German-speaking community of Belgium that guided the expert group during the workshop to design the proposal as described in the previous pages. These considerations come from the discussions we had with the different political representatives in the DG from all the parties in parliament. We list them below. The order does not reflect importance, nor is this exhaustive.

One of the first and important considerations was that the new model had to be 'institutionalised' or 'permanent' (dauerhaft) in some way. The parliament of the DG had organized a mini-public on child-care in 2017 and all parties agreed that this was a very good experience. The question was, *"How to make this type of process a permanent feature of policy-making in the DG?"*

The DG is a small region and its politicians are not full-time politicians. This means that there is actually still a strong connection between the citizens and the politicians. On the other hand, even in such a strongly-knitted region the remark was made on several occasions that 'the usual suspects' were often those showing up for existing participation processes. How to avoid this?

Recruiting and motivating citizens for these kinds of processes was also a recurrent topic in our conversations with the politicians. Politicians find it hard to motivate citizens for longer participation efforts (often mentioned: finding candidates for elections or councils) and several therefore wondered how this can be done for a deliberative group.

We heard on several occasions that while overall there was satisfaction with the mini-public in 2017, the group of citizens had limited diversity and that this should be done better in a future version of the process.

A number of politicians pointed out the fact that deliberation should be about the competences of the DG only as it is frustrating to have a list of recommendations about issues for which the DG parliament is not competent to act. This was the case for some recommendations of the 2017 mini-public. It needs to be noted that we also heard the idea of a "Traumwerkstatt" (dream workplace), suggesting a process in which broad ideas about the future of the region could be considered.

All political parties were positive about the idea of permanent deliberative citizen participation in policy, even if in detail there was not yet a consensus. A metaphor that was brought up was one of the hybrid-car and that one can start with a model that can still evolve after it has been initiated. The model described above can of course grow over time and be given additional tasks.

Another remark was the budgetary consideration. The cost of the 2017 mini-public was mentioned a few times in combination with the fact that the DG is a small region and so both media and citizens will have an eye on the cost of the project. On the other hand, it was said by several politicians that if it is done, it should be done 'well' and that this can have a cost. It was pointed out that the facilitator of the 2017 mini-public did 'cost a lot' but also did a very good job to bring out high-quality deliberation. It was also mentioned that citizens should be remunerated for their efforts.

Finally, it was mentioned several times that it is not only the political parties that should be on board, but the 77.000 inhabitants should feel ownership and this also includes thinking about how to communicate and how to make the media, for example, a partner in this project.

From left to right: Marcin Gerwin, Katrin Stangherlin, Brett Hennig, Cato Léonard, David Farrell, Carsten Berg, Claudia Chwalisz, Graham Smith, Min Reuchamps, Yves Dejaeghere, Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, Benoît Derenne, Christoph Niessen, David Van Reybrouck

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Prof. Farrell, David (Ireland): Professor in Political Science at University College Dublin. Was amongst others the head of the scientific team for the Irish Constitutional Convention.

Gerwin, Marcin (Poland): Responsible for organizing the Citizens' Assemblies in the cities of Gdansk and Lublin in coordination with the city councils.

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