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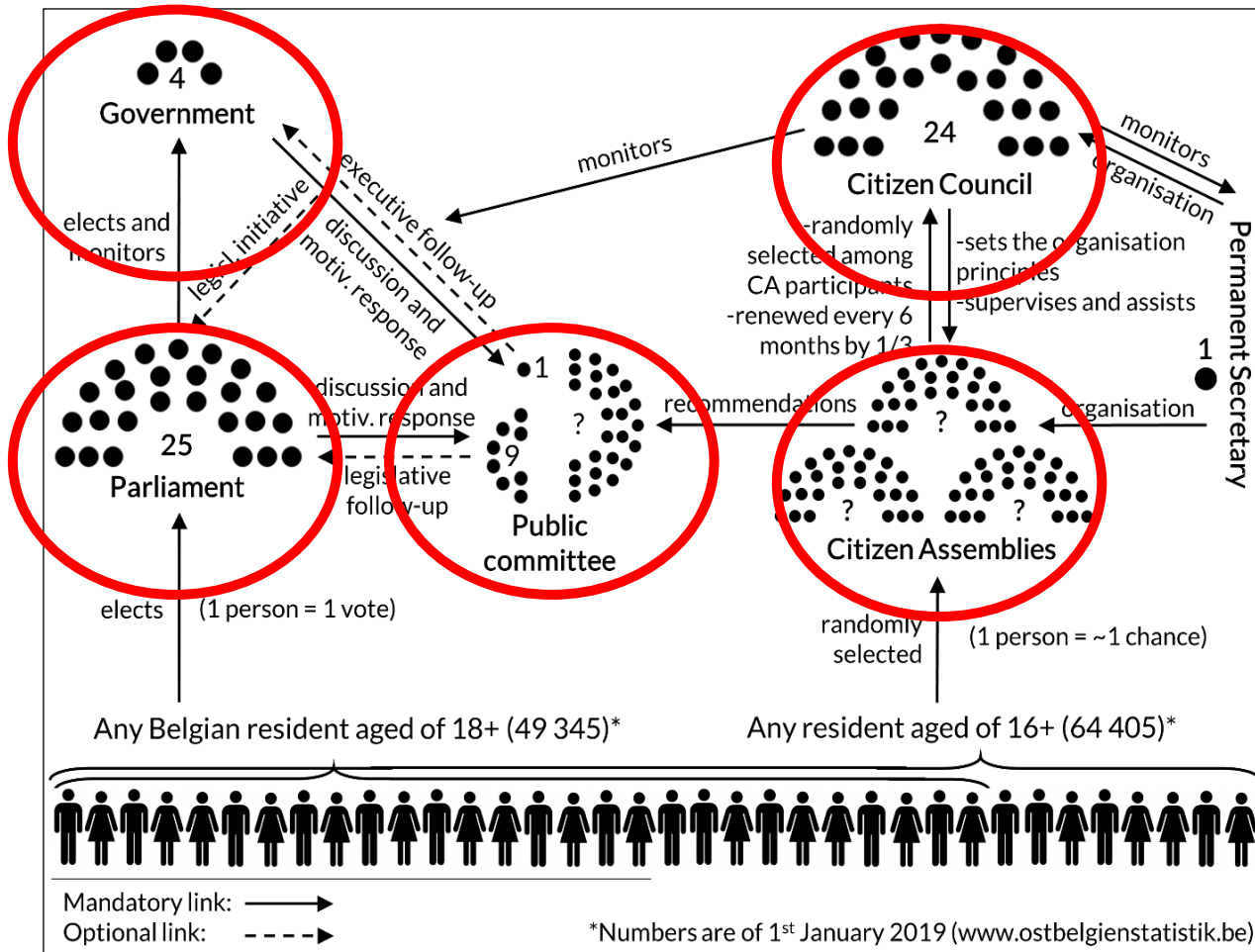


**From citizens to parliamentarians, and back.
A preliminary analysis of the recommendations
from the Permanent Citizens' Dialogue in East
Belgium**

Creating Change through Participation and Deliberation, 29.11 -
30.11.2022, Goethe Universität Frankfurt

00:00 | -00:46
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The Permanent Citizens' Dialogue in the German-speaking Community of Belgium (2019-...)



4 Stages of recommendation making and processing in the Permanent Citizens' Dialogue

1. Finding Stage: Identifying a topic (BR, citizens council), proposals via

- a. public appeal (suggestions need 100 signatures)
- b. suggestions from political factions in parliament
- c. suggestions from within the citizens council (at least 2 promoters)



4. Receiving and implementing recommendations (parliament/government)



2. Narrowing down the chosen topic (BR, citizens council & BV, citizens assembly)



3. Writing recommendations (BV, citizens assembly)



Stage I: Finding

- **23 topics submitted** in 2019 from the public from different issue areas.
 - Cost of Living (3)
 - Education (2)
 - Environment (2)
 - German Language (4)
 - Health (1)
 - Infrastructure (1)
 - Political Reform (3)
 - Refugees (1)
 - Social Care (2)
 - Transport (4)
- Citizens Council **identified 13** that were put out for signatures under consideration for **relevance for DG and political competence**.

Topics that were progressed for signatures (1. Bürgerrat, October 2019)

Cost of Living	Entitlement to meal vouchers
Cost of Living	Support for student housing
Cost of Living	Old age poverty
Education	Digital learning
Education	Improve lived Inclusion in the DG
German Language	Branding of the „DG“ as „Ostbelgien“
German Language	Language support and integration (of non-German speaking residents in the DG)
German Language	Preservation of “Plattdeutsch”
Infrastructure	Providing space for recreational football
Refugees	How to better help refugees in the Dg in everyday life
Social Care	How to improve conditions for care professionals
Social Care	Entry age for nurseries
Transport	Pupil transport by bus



2 topics gathered enough signatures: care & inclusion

Stage II: Narrowing down

Bürgerrat (BR, citizens council):

- for BV1 topic was set at care, later BV2 was tasked with inclusion
- Bürgerrat set questions:

BV1: Care concerns us all! How care conditions for care professionals and care-affected be improved?

BV 2: "Inclusion makes school! What changes do we need in education to make inclusion a win-win for everyone?"

Bürgerversammlung (BV, citizens assembly):

- Citizens Assembly takes over, sets priorities for engaging with the question and hears experts and practitioners.
- **Themes develop along with the expert hearing** (in BV1 in dialogue with the moderator, in BV2 in group discussions)
- **For BV1 & BV2: an editorial group is tasked to create a first draft** (this changes from BV 3 onwards)

Stage II: Narrowing down (continued)

For the 1st Bürgerversammlung (BV):

- Themes develop along with the experts heard by end of day 2 there are around **8 issue areas** that the assembly raised
- An **editorial group** made first draft of **recommendations under 4 themes** (training, IT, self-determination, overarching)
→ **issues without experts were dropped** (bearing in mind that citizens can also be experts)

Stage III: Writing stage

- The full BV discusses the **first full draft**.
- BV submits recommendations within set themes – **no significant change between first and final draft**. (BV1 14 recommendations, BV2 31)

Phase IV: Reception and implementation

Dealing with recommendations in Parliament : **BV1 – Care**
(14 recommendations), final hearing 30.03.2022

Bürgerversammlung 1 - Care	
Full endorsement	2
Partial endorsement	8
- with minor modifications	3
- with major modifications	5
Exists already	3
- positive response	3
- negative response	0
Refusal	1

Table 1. Endorsement of Parliament – BV1

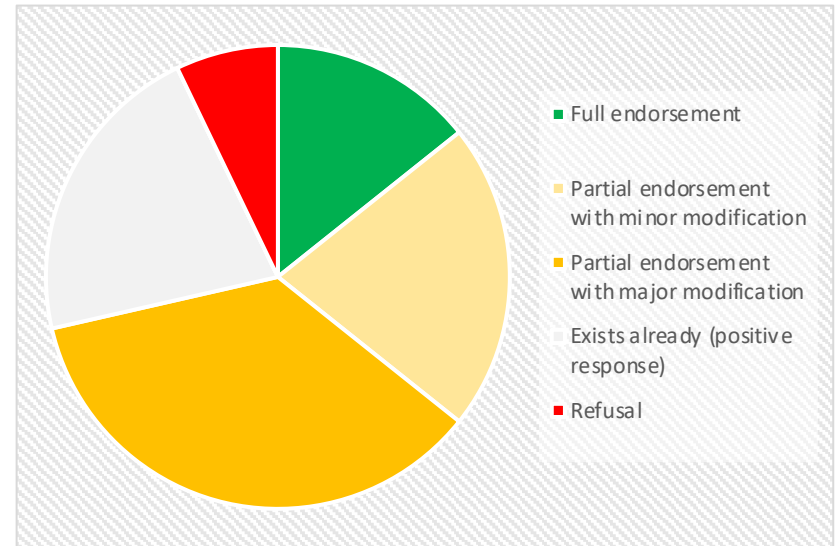


Figure 1. Endorsement of Parliament – BV1

Phase IV: Reception and implementation (continued)

Dealing with recommendations in Parliament : **BV1 – Care** (14 recommendations),
final hearing 30.03.2022

Which reasons justify which action?

Bürgerversammlung 1 - Care	
Full endorsement	<i>None (cf. decree)</i>
Partial endorsement with minor modifications	Respect of leeway Policy not generalisable
Partial endorsement with major modifications (suppression of elements)	Bottom-Up logic (no constraint on target group) Outside scope of competence Deontological objection
Exists already positive response	Improve <i>visibility, accessibility, transparency</i>
Refusal	Outside scope of competence

Table 2. Justifications as presented in Parliament – BV1

Phase IV: Reception and implementation

Dealing with recommendations in Parliament : **BV2 – Inclusion**
(31 recommendations), final hearing 13.10.2022

Bürgerversammlung 2 - Inclusion	
Full endorsement	6
Partial endorsement	12
- with minor modifications	2
- with major modifications	10
Exists already	5
- positive response	2
- negative response	3
Refusal	9

Table 3. Endorsement of Parliament – BV2

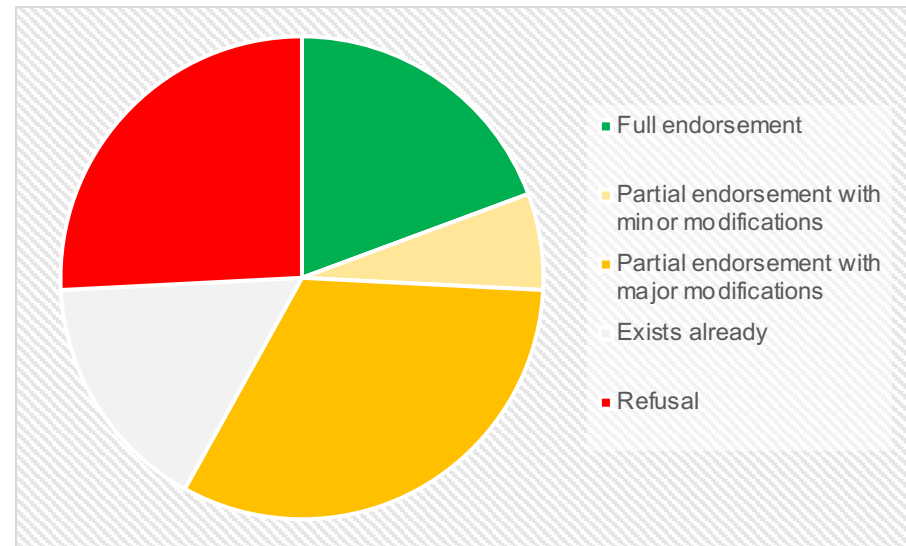


Figure 2. Endorsement of Parliament – BV2

Phase IV: Reception and implementation (continued)

Dealing with recommendations in Parliament : **BV2 – Inclusion** (31 recommendations),
final hearing 13.10.2022

Which reasons justify which action?

Bürgerversammlung 2 - Inclusion	
Full endorsement	<i>None (cf. decree)</i> <i>But also: Expression of ideological support (“sinnvoll”)</i> <i>Or: Contextual elements (OECD)</i>
Partial endorsement with minor modifications	Respect of leeway Policy not generalisable
Partial endorsement with major modifications (suppression of elements)	Bottom-Up logic (no constraint on target group) Outside scope of competence Deontological objection
Exists already positive response	Improve <i>visibility, accessibility, transparency</i>
Exists already negative response	Policy suffices
Refusal	Lack of resources: <i>DG too small, existing shortage, policy proposal out of proportion</i> Sufficiently covered by <u>other</u> recommendation No task of public institutions Deontological objection

Table 4. Justifications as presented in Parliament – BV2

Conclusion – does the Permanent Citizens Dialogue create change?

- **Certainly creates more work for all actors involved**
- **Changes the dynamic of parliamentary committee work**
 - recommendations come from “outside”
 - BR not necessarily working at the same pace
- **Most decision makers are engaged but also demanding**
- **Interesting to observe from BV3 onwards:**
 - First BV to align with political agenda
 - Emerging learning effects (e.g. BR learns how to interact with parliament, BV learns to frame recommendations better, especially in BV4)
 - Different moderator (shift from result oriented to process oriented)
- **Not changing enough to attract media attention?**
 - Process is not radical in any way
 - suggested topics very much tied to everyday problems
 - BVs very amicable – no conflicts to report on
 - Media used to focus on politicians

Thank you