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Climate change as the subject of citizens' assemblies in Polish cities

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Abstract
Citizens' assemblies are a relatively new public planning process in Poland which can be implemented at all levels of administration. This article aims to present the citizens' assembly as a tool for local development. Citizen consultations carried out in the deliberative formula of citizen assemblies in Polish cities were analysed. This article focuses on the substantive goals and results of the local deliberation process using the citizens' assembly tool. This research covers all cities in Poland that implemented it. Taking into account the experience of Polish cities, the analysed period is 2013–2023. Of the identified processes, in-depth research covered those whose main theme was climate change. They include (in chronological order): Gdansk, Wroclaw, Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, Lodz, and Rzeszow.

1. INTRODUCTION

A citizens' assembly is a democratic form of decision-making on matters important to the local community, region, or state. It can be defined as follows: "A citizens' assembly takes a group of random citizens of diverse ages, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic status and after an intensive education program followed by a public consultation and deliberation phase has them make a policy recommendation" [Rose 2009]. OECD defines it "as a representative deliberative process in which a broadly representative body of people weighs evidence, deliberates to find common ground, and develops detailed recommendations on policy issues for public authorities" [OECD 2021].

In recent years, this form of co-governance has been gaining importance. It is a response to the crisis of representative democracy and growing civic awareness, which is manifested in the search for other forms and methods of conducting politics, including the deliberative formula [Dryzek 2010].

In 2016, Ireland was the first to launch a national citizens' assembly, followed by the UK and France in 2019. In the case of cities, a citizens' assembly is a tool of local democracy and has been developed especially in countries with long traditions of local government since the 1970s.

A citizens' assembly is a form of deliberative democracy, and the key element of a citizens' assembly is a debate with the participation of residents. It aims to bring together a representative group of citizens, experts, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to exchange their different insights and perspectives on a complex issue of the assembly subject. By providing the opportunity for inclusive deliberation, the assembly is expected to educate and stimulate awareness of complex issues, direct policy, and legitimise policy recommendations.

The local citizens' assembly has its specificity organisation. It is characterised by a special preparatory and implementation procedure. Participants are selected randomly by sorting (civic lottery) through an algorithm, so that the final composition of the group reflects the demographic structure of a given community as broadly as possible, taking into account criteria such as age, gender, district, or other. The aim is to create a "city in a nutshell" and to develop community recommendations on the assembly subject during a series of meetings. A randomly selected, representative group of residents is invited to the assembly, taking into account demographic criteria.

The assembly includes two basic parts: educational and deliberative aspects. During educational meetings, participants explore the main subject of the assembly and its thematic threads. This is also a stage with the participation of experts and various stakeholders, their speeches, and question and answer sessions. It is also part of the process that is publicly available to all interested parties, in the form of broadcasts, recordings, or information materials. Assembly participants therefore have the opportunity to learn about the various, sometimes oppositional, positions of all representatives - administration, scientific community, institutions, non-governmental organisations, district councils, residents, experts, and other people. The assembly formula allows, firstly, for decisions to be made directly by residents,

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and that they be made thoughtfully and independently based on the best available information. The process with the direct participation of the panellists ends the voting. The final results of the assembly are recommendations that receive at least 80% of support from the panellists. Subsequently, the recommendations are submitted for formal approval at a city council meeting.

The basic assumption of the assembly is that residents are to have a real influence on decisions made in the city. This means that the selected recommendations of the assembly are binding on the city authorities, often in the form of a declaration.

Moreover, an unwritten but particularly important feature of the assemblies is their integrative nature. Building a community and thinking about the city from the perspective of the common good is of great importance for the quality of local development.

The article focuses on the substantive goals and results of the local deliberation process using the citizens' assembly tool. The issues of the procedure itself and the organisation of the assembly are treated as secondary issues. Moreover, the analysis made a purposeful selection of the main subjects, limiting itself to a clear reference to the issue of climate change. The subject of the analysis is therefore citizens' assemblies, which can be called climate citizens' assemblies [Climate Citizens' Assemblies; Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies].

Importance of the challenges related to climate change should go hand in hand with the development of co-governance mechanisms. In the practice of local development, however, there is an inconsistency between the representative form of democracy and the residents' ability to exert influence [Labrador, Zografos 2023].

It is therefore important to introduce various forms of participatory democracy. Collective deliberation embedded in citizens' assembly is believed to be an effective mechanism for complex problems such as climate change [Dryzek, Niemeyer 2019; Stevenson, Dryzek 2014; Willis et al. 2022].

This research covers all cities in Poland that implemented a citizens' assembly in the years 2013–2023. An in-depth analysis was subjected to the processes implemented in the deliberative formula, of which the main subject was climate change. These include seven citizens' assemblies in Gdansk in 2016, Wroclaw, and Warsaw—both in 2020—Krakow and Poznan in 2021, and Lodz and Rzeszow in 2023. It is worth pointing out that five of the above-mentioned cities, i.e., Wroclaw, Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, and Rzeszow, are participants of the EU NetZeroCities mission in a group of 112 European cities.

2. EXPERIENCES IN IMPLEMENTING CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES IN POLAND

A citizens' assembly in Poland is carried out as a public consultation. Pursuant to Art. 5a of the Act on Municipal Self-Government it applies in cases provided directly by the Act and in other matters important for the municipality. The rules and procedures for conducting social consultations are specified in a resolution of the commune council.

The first public consultations at the local level in Poland recognised as a citizens' assembly were carried out in Gdynia in 2013. However, they were more of a broad public opinion survey in the city. Gdynia was followed by Olsztyn, and then by other Polish cities, which, starting with Gdansk, implemented a procedure closer to the direct participation of residents in the approach of a real citizens' assembly. The first experiences with deliberation methods in local development were therefore more of a procedure that, in a more or less modified way, referred to the methodology of public consultations developed by James Fishkin as a deliberative opinion poll®. Deliberative polling brings together people from diverse backgrounds to debate key community issues with conflicting viewpoints. The goal is to thoroughly research the subject, listen to the arguments for and against, discuss different solutions, and finally make informed decisions [Fishkin, Luskin 2005; Fishkin 2011]. Deliberative polling brings together people from different backgrounds to debate key issues for the community and to weigh competing viewpoints.

With the time of development and embedding of deliberative methods in the practice of Polish cities, the method of citizens' assemblies with active and direct participation of residents was introduced. The table below presents basic information about citizens' assemblies conducted in Polish cities in 2013–2023.

The citizens' assembly is characterised by specific rules and an organisation. First of all, it focuses on broad citizens' involvement and dialogue. The essence is a debate with a representative group of residents. Organising this work is time-consuming and requires a lot of involvement of both sides, i.e., of the organisers and participants in the entire process.

The meetings are divided into educational and deliberative (discussion) parts. In the educational part, experts present the issues according to the subject of the assembly. An important doubt is the extent to which 'non-professionals,' in terms of residents without specialist training, can provide recommendations on complex, often technical issues. The quality of the solutions developed largely depends on the substantive material provided in the educational part. The introduction of panellists to the subject is important because of the practical reasons, i.e., providing general knowledge, but also in references to the local conditions. Another value is raising the awareness of residents in general and the related snowball effect, which is achieved by disseminating the acquired knowledge among their families and a group of friends and neighbours. Ultimately, a critical assessment of knowledge received by the assembly participants, their ideas and experiences constitute the comments, and ideas submitted.

The main part of the citizens' assembly is the deliberative part, during which the assembly participants discuss issues. Organisers, experts, and the so-called facilitators take part in the efficient conduct of the discussion. Its finale is a list

Table 1. Citizens' Assemblies in Poland

City	Year	Subject	official website
Gdynia	2013	Dialogue with seniors - standards of providing care services - opinion surveys	lack
Olsztyn	2016	Quality of life in the city - opinion surveys	lack
Gdansk	2016	**How to better prepare Gdansk for heavy rainfall?**	www.gdansk.pl/panel-obywatelski
	2017	How to improve air quality?	
	2018	How to support civic activity in Gdansk?	
Lublin	2018	What to do to breathe clean air?	Panel Obywatelski / lublin.eu - oficjalny portal miasta Lublin
Wroclaw	2020	**How to improve movement around Wrocław, with a view to improving the quality of life and climate protection?**	https://www.wroclaw.pl/rozmawia/panel-obywatelski-wroclaw
Warsaw	2020	**Warsaw Climate Citizens' Assembly**	Warszawski Panel Klimatyczny - Eko (um.warszawa.pl)
Krakow	2021	**Krakow Climate Citizens' Assembly**	lack
	2023	Krakow Transport assembly	
Poznan	2021	**How can Poznan authorities act to counteract and adapt to climate change and the climate crisis?**	https://www.poznan.pl/panelobywatelski/
Lodz	2020	Greenery in the city	Panel Obywatelski - Urząd Miasta Łodzi (lodz.pl)
	2023	**How to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions in Lodz by 55% by 2030?**	
Rzeszow	2023	**Rzeszow Climate Citizens' Assembly**	https://panel-obywatelski.erzeszow.pl/

Assemblies whose main subject was climate change are marked in bold
Source: own study based on city data

of jointly developed recommendations. The success of this part of the assembly is consensus on the set of solutions presented to the city for implementation.
The implementation stage is not directly included in the organisation of the citizens' assembly; however, it is directly related to it. The evaluation of the entire process and the related transparent promotional information and communication policy with residents are crucial. Possible information about barriers to the implementation of the assemblies' tasks is necessary. The implementation of the recommendations will ultimately determine the success of the entire project.

3. MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODS

The research covered all cities in Poland that implemented a citizens' assembly. Taking into account the experience of Polish cities, the analysed period is the decade 2013–2023. Citizens' consultations carried out in a deliberative format were analysed. Of the identified processes, in-depth research covered those whose main subject was climate change. These include citizens' assemblies that were carried out in Gdansk in 2016, in Wroclaw and Warsaw in 2020, in Krakow and Poznan in 2021, and in Lodz and Rzeszow in 2023.

The research covered Internet sources, in particular city information portals regarding citizens' assemblies. A search of the literature and magazine materials was also carried out. A lack of broad analysis of the research subject was identified. Due to the lack of sufficient source materials, the research was supplemented by obtaining information directly from the organisers of citizens' assemblies in the studied cities in the form of telephone conversations and e-mail exchanges.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE AS THE LEITMOTIF OF CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES IN CITIES IN POLAND

4.1. Gdansk

Gdansk was the first city in Poland to launch a new model of social participation, i.e., a citizens' assembly in a deliberative formula, in 2016. The task of the assembly was to develop recommendations regarding rainfall in the context of climate change. The main question asked was: "How to better prepare Gdansk for heavy rainfall as part of the city's adaptation to climate change?" The direct pretext for choosing the subject was the flood on July

14/15, 2016, caused by heavy rainfall (the so-called 100-year rainfall). According to Gdansk Melioration data, it was estimated that 1,650 m^3 of water fell per hour, which gave ~40 million m^3 within 12 hours. The flowing rainwater caused enormous damage, and the situation in the city raised several questions related to the city's readiness for such events.

The organisation of the assembly resulted from a social initiative. The assemblies' work aimed to identify recommendations around three issues formulated as follows:

- What to do to improve rainwater retention in the Tricity Landscape Park?

Justification: At the session of the Gdansk City Council after the July downpour, a proposal to build two retention reservoirs in the Tricity Landscape Park was presented, which aroused numerous controversies.

- What should be the scope of assistance for the inhabitants of Gdansk after heavy rainfall?

Justification: The reaction of the city services after the July floods raised many doubts on the part of residents and district councils. It was decided that it would be worth deciding together what the appropriate procedure should be for similar events.

- When building new retention reservoirs, should we avoid partially filling them with water?

Justification: The current practice in Gdansk was to build 'wet' tanks, partially filled with water. However, there have been comments that if they are already partially filled with water, their water-holding capacity is lower than if they were empty. It was deemed reasonable to verify this practice and analyse whether water retention should be carried out in a different form.

During the work, 19 recommendations were submitted, of which 18 exceeded the 80% support threshold. The inhabitants of Gdansk jointly developed recommendations on how to protect the city before, during, and after flooding. The recommendations were mainly infrastructural and technical, but also organisational and educational. The package of change proposed by residents also includes planned activities of officials and specialists. In total, these are investments worth nearly PLN 150 million, including the expansion of hydrological and meteorological monitoring, the construction of blue–green infrastructure, and many activities consistent with broadly understood adaptation to climate change. More than half of this amount was co-financed by the European Union.

The website of the Gdansk Development Office contains information about the next citizens' assembly. Unfortunately, no documents are reporting the implementation of the recommendations.

4.2. Wroclaw

The first citizens' assembly in Wroclaw was organised at the beginning of 2020, asking the city's residents the following question: How to improve movement around Wroclaw to improve the quality of life and climate protection?

The panellists developed a total of 63 recommendations—50 binding and 13 so-called for consideration, which did not exceed the 80% support threshold in the vote. To organise the many different topics contained in the recommendations, they have been grouped into the below boxes. Half of them correspond closely to a document or a package of documents (strategies, plans, analyses, concepts, etc.) through which particular recommendations will be implemented by the city hall and municipal units. 10 boxes were selected as follows:

- Box no. 1 – Wroclaw Tram Program 2.0 – 26 binding recommendations and 6 for consideration.
- Box no. 2 – Wroclaw Metropolitan Railway – 7 binding recommendations.
- Box no. 3 – Renewable Energy Sources – 4 binding recommendations.
- Box no. 4 – Cycling strategy until 2025 – 4 binding recommendations.
- Box no. 5 – Plan for the Center – 2 binding recommendations and 3 recommendations for consideration.
- Box no. 6 – Organising car parking – 2 binding recommendations and 1 to consider.
- Box no. 7 – Attractive public transport – 2 binding recommendations.
- Box no. 8 – From planning to implementation – 2 binding recommendations.
- Box no. 9 – Legislative initiative – 1 recommendation for consideration.
- Box no. 10 – Investment priorities – 1 binding recommendation and 2 recommendations for consideration.

The diversity of issues presented above indicates a very wide thematic scope that fits into the main question formulated by the assembly. It was noticed that the subject presented in this way turned out to be much too broad. At the same time, the lack of clarity regarding organisational issues, including the time scope or available budget, meant that the level of recommendations varied between very detailed and very general [Ufel 2022].

After finalising the process, the City Hall presented a document entitled "Commentary of the Wroclaw City Hall on the recommendations of the first Wroclaw citizens' assembly," which presented its position and plans related to implementation of tasks. However, it does not contain any indications regarding the time horizon for the implementation of the particular tasks. The executive report is also not available on the citizens' assembly website of the Wroclaw City Hall. Residents are therefore deprived of access to information enabling the evaluation of the implementation of recommendations by the assumptions of the citizens' assembly. This is reported on the website: https://www.akcjamiasto.org/panel/

4.3. Warsaw

"Global warming and the climate change it causes are among the greatest challenges we face as a whole. These are challenges that we must face here and now - that is why the Warsaw Climate Citizens' Assembly was organised. The above words were included as justification for organising the assembly in 2020 at the request of the city's residents and social organisations. This was a clear signal to the Warsaw authorities of how important the subject of the climate crisis is. The assembly covered the issues of effective use of energy in the city—economical management and production of it from environmentally friendly sources. The questions asked, which constituted a starting point for discussion and reflection on the effects of climate change for the inhabitants of Warsaw, included:

- How to increase Warsaw's energy efficiency, and the share of renewable energy sources in the city's energy balance?
- How to save energy in the city, how to use it more efficiently and how to produce it?
- How to develop our city and at the same time support the implementation of the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Warsaw by at least 40% by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050?
- How to ensure thermal and ventilation comfort in buildings with lower energy consumption?
- What should be the standards for the new buildings and how to modernise existing ones?
- How to work within cooperatives and housing communities for more effective energy management in buildings?
- How to finance energy investments?
- What change should be introduced in city lighting?
- What renewable energy sources can there be for Warsaw and what does it involve?

Panellists of the Warsaw Climate Citizens' Assembly developed 93 recommendations, of which 49 met the threshold for implementation. The following were voted on, among others, for recommendations related to:

- green standards, energy management in buildings, and effective use of hot water, including implementation of an energy management system in all municipal public buildings, based on the PN-EN ISO 50001 standard Energy management, or the creation of the Warsaw green building standard;
- spatial planning, including the introduction of climate-proofing procedures by 2022, i.e., verification of all significant investment activities and city documents in terms of the principles of Warsaw's adaptation to climate change;
- renewable energy sources, including energy communities, among other aspects such as installing photovoltaic panels on the roofs of all city buildings by 2030, P+R parking lots, and city depots; and
- education, including launching a municipal energy advisory system for individual and institutional investors, or conducting a campaign aimed at increasing residents' awareness of the climate crisis and behaviours conducive to climate protection (reasonable management of energy, water, and waste).

Due to the significant diversity of tasks in terms of organisational and financial involvement, the period for their implementation was assumed to be 2022–2030. The citizens' assembly website of the Warsaw City Hall service presents semi-annual reports on the progress of individual tasks, showing the progress of work in quite detail. Interesting analysis based on the experience from the Warsaw Climate Assembly presents an article by Andrzejewski (2020). The author shows five key aspects of the citizens' assembly: framing the subject of the assembly, the selection of experts, work in small groups, collecting recommendations, and voting on the recommendations of the assembly.

4.4. Krakow

The first Krakow Climate Citizens' Assembly took place in 2021 and was devoted to climate change and the city's climate neutrality. Assembly participants worked to answer the question: How can authorities and residents reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable energy?
The result of the work was the development and submission to the city authorities 32 recommendations. The recommendations were very complex and formulated in a rather complicated way. The following categories can be distinguished by which particular recommendations were referenced:

- management of adaptation activities - 15 recommendations, including energy review of buildings, renewable energy subsidy program, and climate criteria for public procurement;
- educational and informational – 11 recommendations, including a comprehensive educational and information program, an energy advisory point, a climate education and advisory centre, and promotion of energy and climate standards for buildings and investments;
- infrastructure – 3 recommendations, including photovoltaic installations in municipal public buildings and municipal facilities and a program for replacing street lighting and public spaces;
- legislative (outside the city's competencies) - 3 recommendations, including the Energy Community Project Act, changing regulations regarding collective prosumers, and regulations facilitating the use of photovoltaic installations in multi-family buildings.

The recommendations concerned many areas of the city's development and as noted, were often interdisciplinary and cross-sectional. Their implementation requires the involvement of many city hall departments and municipal teams and units.

The website of the Krakow City Hall contains information on various forms of cooperation between the city and its residents, including the citizens' assembly. However, they are not ordered and complete. In January 2024, the city hall presented a report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Krakow Climate Citizens' Assembly. The descriptions of actions presented in detail show that 15 recommendations have been implemented, 14 are in the process of implementation, and 4 have not yet begun.

4.5. Poznan

The main question of the citizens' assembly organised in Poznan in 2021 was: "How can Poznan authorities act to counteract and adapt to climate change and the climate crisis?" However, it was decided that the scope of problems covered by the initial question was much too broad, hence the need to narrow down the assemblies' subject. As a result of a complex consultation process, two areas were selected in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. It approved the following specific topics presented in the form of questions:

- How to adapt forests and green areas in Poznan to a changing climate?
- Whether to completely phase out coal burning in Poznan households?

As part of the educational part of the assembly, in addition to the planned broadcast of Saturday meetings, there were also four informal meetings—the so-called afternoon tea with experts.
The starting point for the work in the deliberative part were the proposals for recommendations sent by the particular parties, experts, and panellists themselves before the start of the deliberative meetings. These proposals were published on the citizens' assembly website and provided to participants for preliminary review. In the case of the subject regarding forests and green areas, a total of 122 recommendation proposals were submitted, and in the subject of the use of coal there were 73 ideas. Ultimately, 46 recommendations for the first question and 31 for the second question were selected for implementation. The panellists focused on a 'green' city and decided to completely abandon coal burning in households in Poznan, providing support for the poorest people.
The City Hall website includes a page dedicated to the citizens' assembly with a description of the procedure and materials from the process and implementation phase. In the document "Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Poznan Citizens' Assembly in 2022-2023" it can be read that on the subject of 'greening,' 41 recommendations are being implemented, 3 are in preparation, and 2 are to be implemented in the following years. On the subject of 'decarbonisation,' the implementation process is as follows: 28 recommendations are in progress, 1 is in preparation, and 2 are to be implemented in the following years. For most of the recommendations, the implementation period is set to 2026.

4.6. Lodz

In 2023, the 2nd Lodz Citizens' Assembly was held. The assembly participants were looking for an answer to the question "How to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions in Lodz by 55 percent by 2030?" With the participation of experts and various stakeholders, the panellists were tasked with developing recommendations whose implementation would contribute to the reduction of harmful greenhouse gas emissions.
As part of the 2nd Lodz Citizens' Assembly, educational meetings were held in the following thematic blocks:

- Identification of the problem and the consequences of excessive greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions: towards a climate neutral city – an overview of good practices in particular areas:
  - transportation in the city.
  - a circular economy.
  - construction in the city.
  - energy in the city.

As a result of joint work, 96 proposals for recommendations were formulated, of which 39 were selected for implementation through a vote. These recommendations were developed in accordance with the division of good practices adopted in the educational part. The following recommendations were developed in individual areas:

- transportation in the city - 10 recommendations, including the development of an integrated agglomeration transportation system with emphasis on railway connections and the development of the Park & Ride car park network, as well as the gradual improvement and expansion of the public transport network, with particular emphasis on tram networks;
- a circular economy/waste management – 10 recommendations, including intensification and promotion of selected waste collection (so-called PSZOK), and launch of a mobile PSZOK, or restrictions on the purchase of bottled water in municipal institutions and their subordinate units;
- construction in the city - 8 recommendations, including introducing standards for the implementation of urban investments regarding the use of ecological, low-emission technologies and building materials, as well as optimising the energy costs of building operations; and
- energy in the city – 11 recommendations, including installing photovoltaic modules on municipal public buildings and on city-owned residential buildings.

The website of the Lodz City Hall has a page dedicated to subsequent editions of the citizens' assembly with complete materials regarding both the implementation and post-implementation phases.

4.7. Rzeszow

The first citizens' assembly in the capital of Podkarpacie was organized in 2023. Its goal, indicated directly in the name, i.e., the Rzeszow Climate Citizens' Assembly, was to develop recommendations aimed at achieving climate neutrality.

In the educational part, the panellists listened to a total of 23 positions of non-governmental organisations, expert presentations, and speeches by representatives of the City Hall on the energy efficiency of buildings and the future of sustainable transportation. An interesting element of this part was the preparation of 6 future scenarios for a climate-neutral Rzeszow.

In response to the question posed to the assembly participants: How can Rzeszow achieve climate neutrality by 2030? The work was divided into two main blocks, i.e., energy and transportation. Of the 225 ideas initially submitted, 114 recommendations were put to a vote. Ultimately, 51 of them were selected for the city.

In the case of 17 energy recommendations, the following were highlighted: energy storage system, photovoltaic installations, and thermal modernisation of urban buildings. In addition to the indications for hard infrastructure, soft tasks were also focused on, including conducting an information and educational campaign on climate neutrality, energy efficiency, and energy saving, as well as related solutions and technologies. In terms of 34 recommendations regarding transportation, the panellists pointed to the expansion of bicycle infrastructure, zero-emission buses, construction of a road ring around Rzeszow, creation of transfer hubs, development of system of incentives to use public transportation, development of a strategy and comprehensive transportation planning, construction of Park & Ride parking lots, and a change in the offer of public transportation tickets. The transportation recommendations are to be included in the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for Rzeszow.

The website of the Rzeszow city hall has a page with organised information and documents devoted to the citizens' assembly.

5. SUMMARY

The citizens' assembly is widely promoted as a new deliberative tool for enhancing both democracy and sustainability. A review of citizens' assemblies conducted in Polish cities shows that climate change is a more and more common theme.

The content of the above study certainly does not exhaust the whole subject of analysis. The next stages of research may delve deeper into, among other aspects, the assessment of the so-called basic standard for organising citizens' assemblies [Gerwin 2018].

Due to the difficulty and complexity of this issue, it is important to provide participants with reliable knowledge in an accessible way. This applies to both the form and the use of non-specialised language. As Ufel notes: "with extremely complex and multi-level issues such as the climate change, a few days given to listen to experts, to conduct discussions in large groups, and to come up with recommendations that are supported by the large majority of participants is not enough to grasp the issue in the necessary breadth and depth" [Ufel 2021].

The clash of discussing often a technical subject such as climate change with the main target group, whom are city residents who often do not have elementary knowledge of the topics discussed, is a significant obstacle. An important role here is played by expert educators (scientists), expert practitioners (officials, employees of municipal companies and businesses), and expert observers (NGOs, mediators), who should correct identified cognitive gaps, as well as ensure the objectivity of the process and protect against possible manipulations. The knowledge provided by experts constitutes an important basis for formulating conclusions and making recommendations. These are not obvious elements of a citizens' assembly, which, by its nature of deliberation, should resist bias and potential lobbying forces, but practice shows that lack of sensitivity to these issues may lead to the development of a set of recommendations that are not optimal for the city and its residents.

Another difficulty identified in the citizens' assembly procedure is the limited time, and the process from presenting the assembly subject to developing and selecting recommendations is very condensed. Implementing the citizens' assembly recommendations is an even greater challenge. The process is intended to be transparent at all stages. The list of accepted recommendations is published on the citizens' assembly website, and the authorities should report on the progress of task implementation. Showing intermediate steps and milestones allows one to monitor and control the status of current work. In practice, however, deficits in this area are observed. Organisational problems often arise, as well as resistance from entities and people who experience the effects of decisions made as a result of the citizens' assembly. The city is obliged to respond to all comments.

The organisation of the citizens' assembly provides exceptionally strong legitimacy for the residents' recommendations, and their implementation takes place regardless of the change of government. The authorities are primarily obliged to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the assumptions of the citizens' assembly, and in the event of any implementation problems, they should not deprive residents of reliable information.

The limitations of citizens' assemblies are also pointed out. The key point among them seems to be the control of the process by the authorities/administration. They determine the main subject, time, materials, and select the moderators and experts. This may limit the breaking of paths already included in the implemented or planned policy and prevent the development of more breakthrough recommendations [Ufel 2021]. The top-down process may therefore be perceived as "policed," which may

lead participants to assume what Marit Böker called "an ominously passive role" [Böker 2017].

There are also dangers associated with using climate citizen assemblies as fashionable tools that are used for political marketing purposes.

The citizens' assembly is a 'learning' process requiring flexibility and openness to change. There is, therefore, no simple way to replicate it. However, the experiences of other cities are very valuable, and it is worth learning about the conclusions and tips from already implemented processes.

The citizens' assembly is also a very important lesson of citizenship. It integrates residents, teaches tolerance and respect, provides knowledge, and above all, builds awareness of the city as a common good. As a result of the meetings, knowledge is exchanged, but also different perspectives and needs are recognised. The participation of residents is also an important signal to local authorities that, despite formal representative democracy, citizens want to be an active part of local development. Introducing mechanisms of deliberative democracy is a step towards sustainable development. In the case of introducing the subject of climate change, it is also a step towards climate neutrality.

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