



# Climate Assemblies: Emerging Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

A Report of the Knowledge  
Network on Climate Assemblies

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KNOCA is a European-based network that aims to improve the commissioning, design, implementation, impact and evaluation of climate assemblies, using evidence, knowledge exchange and dialogue. KNOCA documents climate assembly practice, identifies and disseminates best practice for impact and shapes future trends.

You can find us and join KNOCA at [knoca.eu](https://knoca.eu).

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## Introduction

Citizens' assemblies and juries on aspects of the climate and ecological crisis (or "climate assemblies" for short) are an unprecedented and exciting development in climate governance. The OECD talks about a "deliberative wave" of citizens' assemblies that bring together diverse groups of everyday people that resemble the wider population to learn, deliberate and make recommendations<sup>2</sup>. At the peak of that wave, over the last five years, is increasing experimentation with climate assemblies, mostly across Europe. Since the French Citizens' Convention for the Climate began its work in October 2019, at least 200 have taken place, with over a dozen at national level (see Figure 1).

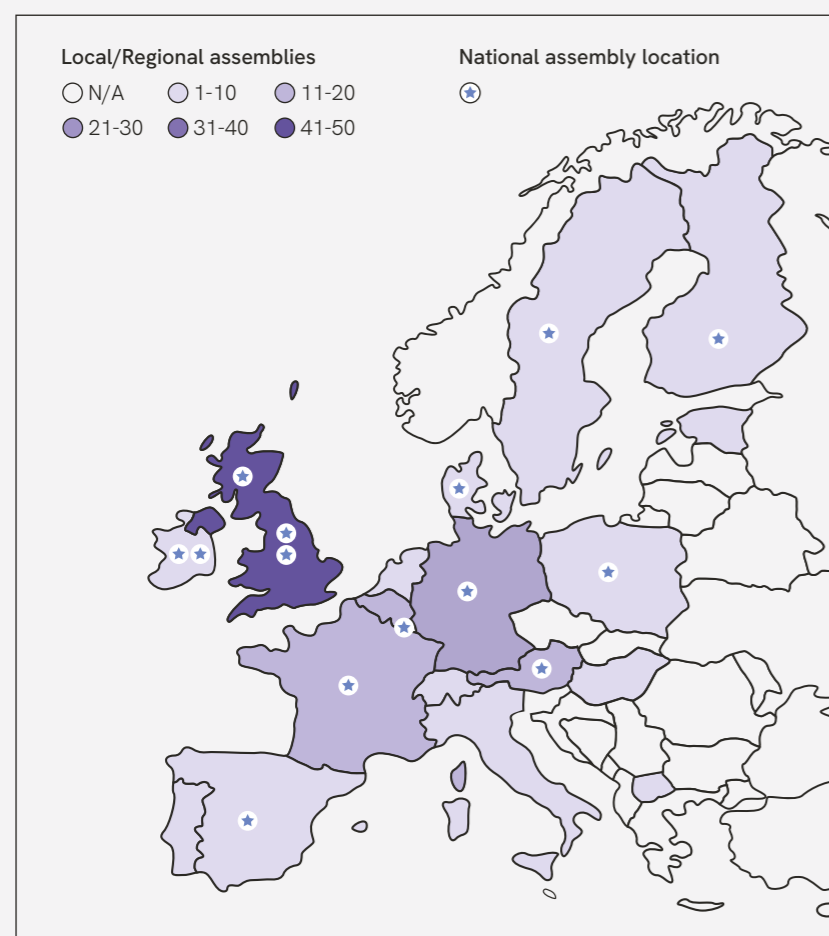
Transition to net zero and climate resilient societies requires deep social and economic transformations that will have significant impacts on citizens' choices and behaviours. The interest in climate assemblies reflects a growing recognition that such transitions need to engage the public directly, both to ensure better policy-making and to improve acceptance of decisions which will have significant effects on people's day-to-day lives. It needs to be done in ways that respond to those people demanding urgent and immediate action and those who are more sceptical of the pace of change to avoid democratic and climate backlash and policy reversal.

Climate assemblies are not the only way to involve citizens in decision making, but widespread interest and enthusiasm for this form of engagement means we have much to learn from current practice.



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Figure 1. Climate Assemblies Across Europe



### Local/Regional assemblies

UK	50	Italy, Spain, Switzerland	5
Germany	26	Finland, Hungary	3
Netherlands	20	Estonia, Ireland, Portugal	2
France	18	North Macedonia, Sweden	1
Austria	15		
Poland	13	Brazil, Japan, Maldives	3
Belgium	11	Canada, Lebanon, USA	1
Denmark	10		

**But do they work?** Do climate assemblies improve policy and climate action more broadly? Do they lead to wider acceptance amongst the public for sustained action on climate?

The answer is not straightforward. The first wave of climate assemblies provides evidence that citizens are willing and able to come to robust policy recommendations on complex and controversial aspects of climate policy. At times, they have also had notable impacts on climate policy, public debate and assembly members' attitudes and behaviours (see Box 3). However, too many expectations have been put on a novel democratic institution that is yet to be fully embedded within our political systems. For more sustained impacts, experimentation needs to be replaced by institutionalisation and embedding of climate assemblies. Climate assemblies cannot be expected to solve all our current governance problems, but they can become a meaningful and effective element of climate governance.

This leads to the significant question: **how can climate assemblies be embedded more effectively into our political systems so that their impacts on climate governance are more robust and sustained?**

The Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA) was launched in June 2021 by the European Climate Foundation to develop answers to that more nuanced question.

### Box 1. What is KNOCA?

- KNOCA is a European-based network funded by the European Climate Foundation that aims to improve the commissioning, design, implementation, impact and evaluation of climate assemblies, using evidence, knowledge exchange and dialogue.
- KNOCA has more than 700 members from 39 countries, including policy officials, practitioners, academics and activists.
- KNOCA documents climate assembly practice, identifies and disseminates best practice for impact and shapes future trends, providing learning and advice through open and closed channels.

Find out more and join KNOCA at <https://knoca.eu/>

This report draws on the first three years of KNOCA's work, offering an overview of what we can learn from the recent wave of climate assemblies (particularly at national level) and what work needs to be done to improve their impact. The report places climate assemblies within the broader field of public participation, explaining how they can make valuable contributions to climate policy and governance. But experience from the first wave of assemblies shows that current practice has its limitations.

If climate assemblies are to be used more extensively as a way of engaging citizens in shaping climate action, it is critical to better understand and be responsive to the conditions that need to be in place for different impacts to be realised. This is KNOCA's agenda.

## Citizen Participation in Climate Governance

Citizen participation in climate governance is seen as valuable for a number of reasons:



**Citizen participation can bring the insights of everyday people into decision making in ways that increase the robustness of climate policy.** Citizens bring a different way of looking at policy from those who work within climate governance communities. They can bring new ways of approaching problems and articulating solutions that are attuned to their knowledge, interests, needs and attitudes.



**Citizen participation can challenge social and climate injustices.** If politics is about who gets to be in the room and who defines what needs to be done, then involving citizens can redress existing power imbalances, confronting policies and practices that privilege those vested interests that profit from the status quo.



**Public participation can help break political deadlocks on climate action.** Participation can show that citizens are ahead of politicians on what needs to be done, giving political leaders the confidence and willingness to take action.



**Citizen participation can reduce polarisation around climate action.** Polarisation is fostered in contexts where people have little or no direct contact with those different from themselves. Those on the extremes fan the flames of fear. Participation can have a very different dynamic. Working alongside those who are different from ourselves can breed mutual respect and understanding.



**Citizen participation can increase the legitimacy and public acceptance of social action on climate.** As the transition to low-carbon futures unfolds, it will impact people's everyday lives more directly. Knowing that fellow citizens have been part of the decision making processes increases public confidence and builds consent in dealing with change.



**Citizen participation can promote a more climate aware and politically confident citizenry.** Through participation, everyday people learn more about the climate crisis and develop the skills and confidence to participate more fully in climate action at individual and collective levels.

### Box 2. Defining Public Participation

The term public participation is often used in different ways – particularly by European institutions – to include citizen and stakeholder forms of participation. Stakeholder participation involves the engagement of organised social and economic groups, including NGOs. Climate assemblies are a form of *citizen participation*, directly engaging everyday people in a personal rather than professional capacity.<sup>3</sup>

Since the adoption of the Aarhus Convention, citizen participation in climate decision making has become a more standard expectation and often a legal obligation. The EU Governance Regulation introduces requirements at both the European and Member State level. For example, Article 10 on National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) states that each Member State “shall ensure that the public is given early and effective opportunities to participate in the preparation of the draft integrated national energy and climate plan... in the preparation of the final plan well before its adoption — as well as of the long-term strategies”. Article 11 requires Member States to establish a permanent multi-level climate and energy dialogue that enables the general public to actively engage and discuss the different scenarios envisaged for energy and climate policies. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) EU directive is another example with explicit provisions for public participation.

But, too often commitments to citizen participation have failed to live up to their promise. Participation initiatives have been sporadic, little more than a tick box exercise, implemented in an inconsistent manner and too late in policy cycles – with little evidence of impact on decisions and frustration for those citizens involved in the process.

## Why Climate Assemblies?

Climate assemblies promise to solve many of the weaknesses of previous participation efforts. They do this through combining recruitment of a diverse group of everyday people that resemble the wider population with a rigorous and facilitated process of learning and deliberation and coming to collective recommendations.

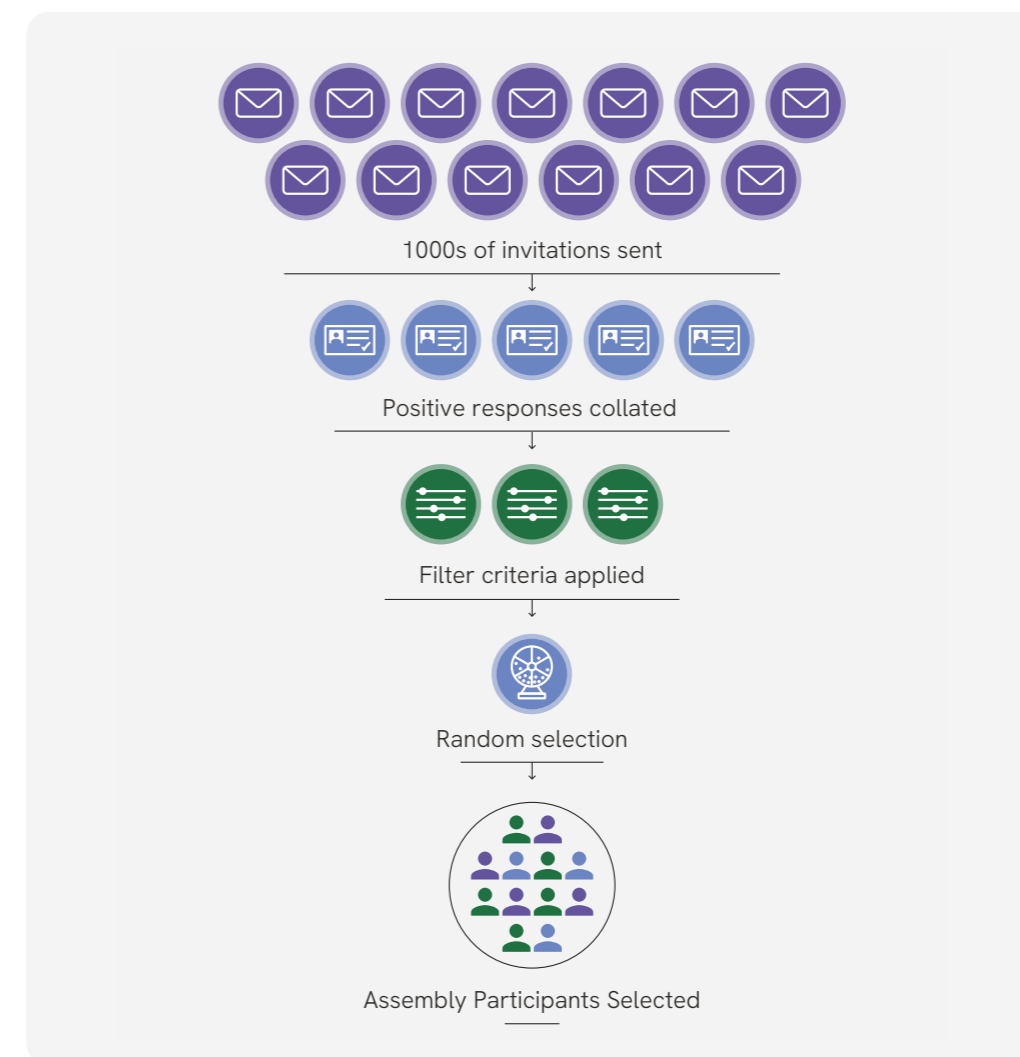
Members of climate assemblies are usually recruited through a two stage “democratic lottery” (see Figure 2). In the first stage, letters are sent to randomly selected households, often with extra letters targeted to areas where participation levels are typically low (e.g., poorer neighbourhoods). Alternatively, randomly generated phone numbers are used. In the second stage, quota sampling is applied to the pool of volunteers to ensure that the members of the assembly resemble the diversity of wider society<sup>4</sup>. In Scotland’s Climate Assembly, for example, age, gender, household income, ethnicity, geography, rurality, disability and attitude towards climate change were used.

This form of recruitment leads to a highly diverse set of participants and means that the assembly is not dominated by powerful and entrenched interests or politicians worried about re-election.

Deliberation is critical to assemblies. Members hear from and question a range of witnesses. Not just technical experts, but also advocates and those with direct experience of climate impacts. Through active facilitation, members are given the time to learn, deliberate and collaborate in developing recommendations.

The diversity of the assembly and the learning and deliberation members go through avoids many of the problems associated with other forms of public participation and means that they are recognised as a trustworthy and legitimate body by the broader public.

Figure 2. How Democratic Lottery Works



## Documenting Climate Assemblies and their Impacts

KNOCA's first task has been to document existing practice and impacts. Without understanding what is happening on the ground, it is impossible to develop meaningful guidance on good practice. Most climate assemblies have been organised in the last five years. That means that not all of their impacts have rippled through the system.

KNOCA's main focus has been to learn from the national-level climate assemblies (and juries) in Europe<sup>5</sup>, given the novelty of the use of citizens' assemblies at this level and the range and extent of governance powers available to national governments. Lessons are also being drawn from innovative and developing practice at other levels of governance, whether sub-national<sup>6</sup> or trans-national<sup>7</sup>.

Through desk research, interviews and a series of popular learning calls and workshops<sup>8</sup>, KNOCA has collated information on the key features of around a dozen national-level climate assemblies and a more detailed understanding of the success factors for assemblies.

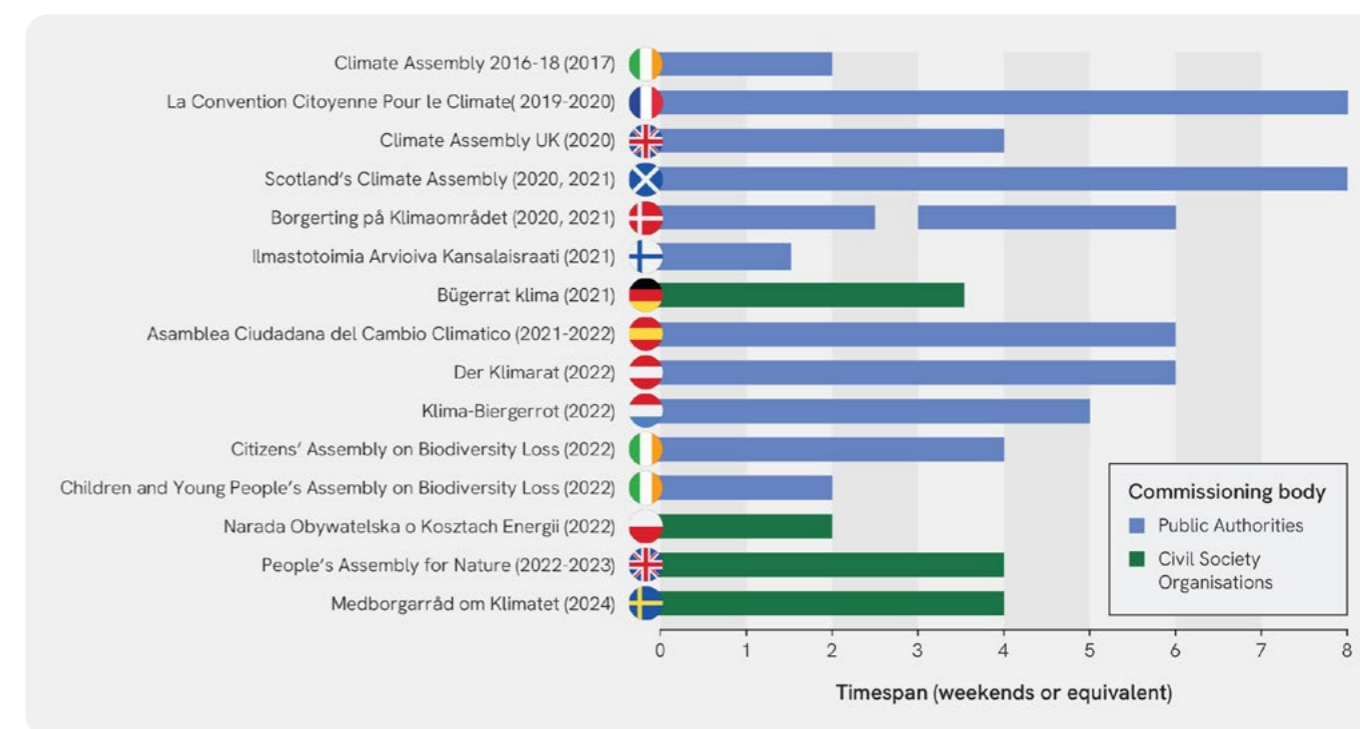
In all cases where climate assemblies have developed their own recommendations,<sup>9</sup> they have proposed far more progressive climate action than existing government and party policy. A recent study of the first few national climate assemblies shows that members are more willing to support 'sufficiency' policies that aim to reduce consumption and production of products and services<sup>10</sup>. Citizens are also more willing to propose the regulation of individuals and businesses rather than relying on market incentives or voluntary action.

Examples include proposed policies in politically controversial areas such as restricting air travel, reducing meat and dairy-based diets, extending the lifetime of appliances and restricting advertisements for products with negative climate impacts. These are areas where governments have been almost universally unwilling to act.

The impact of climate assemblies has varied widely because of the different ways they have been organised and integrated into the political system. For example:

- Most have been commissioned by governments, often at the behest of parliaments, but assemblies organised by civil society organisations are increasing in number (see Figure 3).
- Their tasks have varied. Most assemblies have been given broad questions focused on achieving carbon reductions within a particular time frame, often with explicit requirements to consider fairness or social justice. Some assemblies (Scotland and Spain) have included adaptation in their remits. Recent assemblies have had a more focused task, for example on energy poverty (Poland) and biodiversity loss (Ireland). Tighter remits are more common at sub-national levels.
- The resources available to assemblies have been very different. Some have been well financed by government, meeting between six to eight weekends (see Figure 3). Others have had to deal with smaller budgets, requiring external support (for example, from the European Climate Foundation) and had less time for members to learn, deliberate and come to recommendations. The difference in available time has an impact on the quality of deliberations and recommendations.
- The commitment to respond by commissioners has varied, along with the way in which they have been integrated into the political system<sup>11</sup>. In France, the President promised to take all the recommendations direct to parliament, regulation or referendum, although did not follow through in all cases. In Ireland, recommendations on climate and biodiversity loss were considered by a special parliamentary committee which then reported to government. Unsurprisingly, evidence suggests that it is those assemblies commissioned and responded to by the core executive (president and prime minister's office at national level; mayors and council leaders at sub-national level) that tend to secure more policy influence.
- The role of members after the assembly has varied. In France and Scotland, for example, an extra assembly weekend was added for members to review the government response.

Figure 3. Variations in Scale of National Climate Assemblies



Such variations help explain the diversity of impacts of climate assemblies that we have seen to date. It is too early to evaluate the full impact of many assemblies, but already significant impacts can be discerned (see Box 3).

### Box 3. Examples of Impacts of Climate Assemblies

**Impact on policy.** The Irish Climate Action Bill (2020) incorporated the majority of the recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly 2016-18. The Climate and Resilience Bill (2021) translated a number of the French Convention measures into law, although many were in a modified form. A number of the recommendations of the Luxembourg Climate Citizens' Council have been translated into the redrafted National Energy and Climate Plan submitted to the European Commission in 2023.

**Impact on institutions and climate actors.** The Climate Change Committee used the recommendations from Climate Assembly UK to frame its Sixth Carbon Budget and has integrated deliberative methods into its work. The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Climate Action established to consider the Irish Citizens' Assembly's recommendations was made a permanent body. The Danish Climate Assembly has been given the same status as (sectoral) social partnerships.

**Impact on public discourse.** The French Convention stimulated extensive public debate on climate transition that raised its salience amongst politicians. The level of knowledge of the assembly amongst the Austrian public was fairly high. The Irish Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss has elevated the importance of the nature crisis in political and public debate and in terms of media attention.

**Impact on participants.** Strong and consistent effects on the attitudes and behaviours of members towards climate action can be found across almost all assemblies, with evidence from the UK that this is sustained and even enhanced over time.

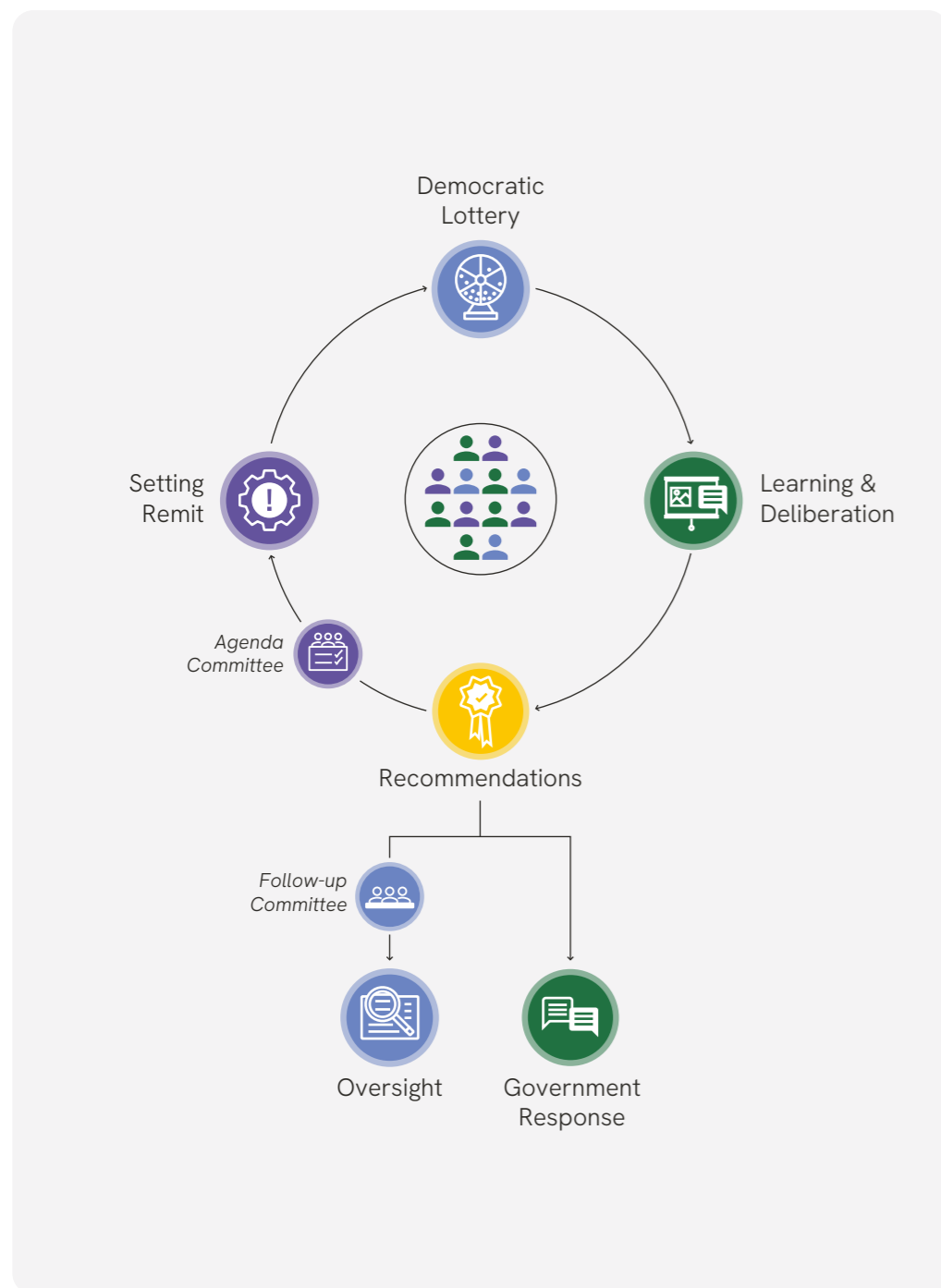


## Innovations in Assembly Practice

A number of developments in assembly practice are emerging that promise to extend and diversify their impact over time. Many of these innovations are happening at local or regional level - the larger number of assemblies at these levels mean more opportunities for experimentation and learning.

- **Permanent assemblies.** Permanent climate assemblies have been established in the Brussels-Capital Region and Milan. They operate on an annual cycle. The Brussels assembly is empowered to set its own agenda and monitors the response of government (see Figure 4). The Milan assembly is focused on the implementation of the municipal climate strategy that has already been agreed by the government. The logic of permanent bodies is that single, ad-hoc assemblies cannot be responsive to the changing nature of the climate and ecological crisis<sup>12</sup>.
- **Civil society-initiated assemblies.** While the majority of climate assemblies are commissioned by government, civil society organisations are beginning to see the potential of assemblies as a way of challenging inaction by government and other actors and shaping public discourse<sup>13</sup>. The first CSO-initiated climate assembly was organised in Germany to influence the federal election campaigns and the coalition programme for government. More recently, CSOs have commissioned assemblies on the nature crisis in the UK, on energy poverty in Poland and on Sweden's commitment to the Paris Agreement. A similar assembly is currently planned in Norway to consider the country's responsibilities given its growing oil and gas wealth in a time of climate and ecological crisis. The Skopje Climate Assembly is an example of one of the few local initiatives commissioned within civil society, with the Global Assembly at the other end of the governance scale.
- **Involvement of stakeholders.** A number of assemblies have developed more formalised ways of engaging stakeholders, beyond their participation in governance bodies and providing evidence. The aim is to facilitate stronger recommendations based on the experience and knowledge of stakeholders and to increase their commitment to the process and to implementing relevant outcomes. In the German city of Erlangen, proposals to realise net zero moved between a local research institute, a stakeholder forum and the assembly. In The French regional Citizens' Convention for Climate and Biodiversity in Burgundy-Franche-Comté, stakeholders were incorporated into the first day of the final two weekends of the assembly at the point where members were developing their recommendations. In G1000 processes in the Netherlands, stakeholders work alongside citizens from the beginning of the assembly.
- **Integrating systems-thinking.** A perceived limitation of climate assemblies is that they are generally not framed or structured to support systems thinking: that is, to comprehensively analyse interactions between policy domains, the externalities of policies (e.g., the impact of supply chains on vulnerable geographies) or the structural causes of the climate and ecological crisis and the types of transformations that may be needed to respond effectively. Rather assemblies tend to focus on and produce recommendations across a number of different policy areas without necessarily considering these broader dynamics. Assemblies are experimenting with different ways of promoting systems thinking. For example, the Grenoble's Citizens' Convention for the Climate used the reference pathways for carbon neutrality published by the French Agency for Ecological Transition to develop territory-specific scenarios to inform deliberations<sup>14</sup>; the organisers of the Swedish climate assembly considered ways of integrating participatory forms of systems modelling within its work programme<sup>15</sup>.
- **Broadening the constituency.** Experimentation is taking place to centre those not present within assemblies, in particular young people, future generations and nonhuman nature. In Ireland, a Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss was co-designed and delivered with 7 to 17 year-olds, feeding its ideas into the adult assembly<sup>16</sup>. The French participation organisation Missions Publiques is incorporating the seventh-generation principle in its work as a way of decentring the interests of current generations and bringing in consideration of future generations and nonhuman nature<sup>17</sup>.

Figure 4. The Brussels-Capital Region Permanent Climate Assembly



## Where Current Practice Can be Improved

While climate assemblies are having positive impacts on climate governance, they have not fully delivered on their promise. KNOCA has found that limitations of climate assemblies tend to be connected to five main issues<sup>18</sup>:

- **Integration in the political system.** Most attention is given to organising the assembly – relatively little on preparation by the commissioning body and others to follow-up on the recommendations. Roles of public officials, politicians, stakeholders and assembly members in promoting and monitoring action are generally not clearly articulated and distributed once the assembly has made its recommendations. How to sustain follow-up after civil society organised assemblies raises a different set of challenges and ways of working for these organisations.
- **The definition of an appropriate remit.** The remit given to assemblies is often broad, covering the full range of climate policy, with not enough time to deal with issues in the necessary depth. Remits do not always align with policy windows to enable policy impact. Public authorities seem reluctant to task assemblies with dealing with specific politically salient climate policy challenges. Citizens’ assemblies work best when they deal with issues that have distinct trade-offs and where politicians have been unable or unwilling to act. Examples exist where citizens themselves play a key role in selecting the topics for the assembly to work on (e.g., Denmark, local citizens’ jury practice in the UK). Questions remain as to how best to frame remits to enable assembly members to productively interrogate demands for systems transformations.
- **Knowledge curation.** Experimentation continues in how best to support members’ learning and deliberations. Not enough attention has been given to how to respond to the different learning styles of such diverse groups of citizens and how to support systems-thinking so that assemblies do not replicate existing policy silos.
- **Transparency and communication of the process.** Broader public and stakeholder awareness of the assembly process and its recommendations is often limited, with ineffective media engagement and outreach to stakeholders. How best to communicate climate assemblies in ways that attract journalists and social media influencers remains unclear. A number of assemblies have not been transparent about their recruitment, governance and evidence base which can generate suspicion of bias.
- **Scepticism amongst climate governance actors.** For many actors within the climate community, climate assemblies are an unknown quantity – and for some a challenge to their established position. Even though evidence suggests otherwise, concerns are raised about the capacity of citizens to deal with complex climate issues and perceptions that members of assemblies are climate activists rather than everyday people. Climate NGOs are unsure how to position themselves in relation to assemblies, rarely prioritise public participation in climate action in their advocacy activities and are not fully aware of how climate assemblies could help advance climate action more broadly and support the achievement of their specific objectives.



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## Promoting Best Practice for Impact

KNOCA is focused on improving commissioning, design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of climate assemblies to ensure robust impact on climate governance. Its objective is to produce useable guidance to support organisers, designers, practitioners and advocates in their work. And it aims to produce that guidance through active collaboration with the wider KNOCA community which has extensive experience in deliberative processes and climate governance. KNOCA workshops on key areas of assembly practice have been vital spaces for sharing learning and promoting innovation.

### Box 4. KNOCA Resources

*Practical Guidance:* best practice materials in the form of short Quick Reads and longer Guidance Documents

*Recorded KNOCA Events:* videos of our past learning calls and workshops on our website or on [the KNOCA YouTube channel](#).

*KNOCA Briefings:* research findings on key aspects of climate assembly practice.

KNOCA has revamped its website with a more intuitive design and a comprehensive search function, making it easier to access the wealth of information and guidance we offer. A new innovation has been the introduction of Quick Reads – short introductions to key topics. The first three Quick Reads are on setting the remit, governance and follow-up. More will follow.

Longer Guidance Documents provide more detailed direction on aspects of climate assemblies. KNOCA does not set out a blueprint for how to run assemblies as the political, social and environmental context will affect commissioning, design and implementation and follow-up. Our aim is to clarify the issues facing commissioners, designers and advocates, laying out the implications of choices they have to make.

These Guidance Documents and Briefings are often developed in partnership with other organisations, which have included Bureau Burgerberaad, Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST), Climate Outreach, Danish Board of Technology (DBT – now Democracy X), Federation for Innovation in Democracy (FIDE), Grantham Institute, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Iswe, Rinascimento Green, Shared Future, TPX Impact and the University of Westminster. A number of other organisations and individuals have worked closely with KNOCA in the development and delivery of workshops and learning calls.

KNOCA has also partnered with FIDE to organise the Spring Schools on Climate Citizens' Assemblies. The first School took place in Milan in May 2023; the second in Budapest in May 2024<sup>19</sup>.

## KNOCA Guidance Documents and Briefings

### KNOCA Guidance Documents

Preparing for a Climate Assembly  
Setting the Remit  
Key Drivers of Impact  
Impact Evaluation Framework

*Forthcoming Guidance Documents Include:*  
Engaging Children and Young People  
Supporting Members Post-Assembly  
Playbook for Climate CSOs

### KNOCA Briefings

No.1. Framing of Climate Assemblies  
No.2. Integration into the Policy Process  
No.3. Legitimacy and Resonance  
No.4. Legacy and Impact  
No.5. Approaches to Evaluation  
No.6. Governance Structures and Practices  
No.7. Attitudes of Climate Policy Actors  
No.8. Designing the Follow-Up  
No.9. Knowledge Curation

*Forthcoming Briefings Include:*  
Towards Permanent Climate Assemblies  
Developments at Sub-National Level  
The Role of Stakeholders  
Equity and Diversity in Assemblies  
The Impact of the French Convention  
Civil Society-Commissioned Assemblies  
Legitimacy and Survey Experiments



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## Where Next for KNOCA?

In its fourth year of operation KNOCA will be working on a number of projects that are critical to understanding and improving the conditions for the success of climate assemblies. The next iteration of this Current Trends Report will provide an update on emerging learnings from these and other knowledge development projects that are at the cutting edge of contemporary climate assembly practice.

- **Permanent climate assemblies.** The climate assemblies in the Brussels-Capital Region (see Figure 4) and Milan are at the leading edge of establishing permanent infrastructure. KNOCA was part of the design team of the Brussels assembly and will work with partners, including FIDE, to provide support for peer-learning and advocacy for these emerging assemblies and to develop a community of practice for those administrations that are interested in following in their wake. Different models for how permanent bodies can be embedded in climate governance will be investigated.
- **Knowledge curation.** One of the most common questions we are asked by commissioners and organisers of climate assemblies is how best to manage the provision of evidence within assemblies in ways that are balanced, robust and accessible to the diversity of assembly members. KNOCA has published two relevant Briefings on governance and knowledge curation but recognises that more detailed guidance is needed on approaches to establishing knowledge committees and presenting evidence that respects different learning styles and supports systems-thinking.
- **Communicating climate assemblies.** If climate assemblies are to have an effect on wider public attitudes and support for their recommendations, then communication is key<sup>20</sup>. Only a few assemblies (Austria, France, Ireland and Scotland, for example) have paid significant attention to communication through established and new media outlets and different societal stakeholders. Guidance to be authored by Missions Publiques will help organisers and advocates build more effective communication strategies.
- **Engaging stakeholders.** Two new resources will inform KNOCA's expanding work on how to engage stakeholders. A playbook for climate CSOs, authored by Alina Averchenkova, will be launched in July 2024. Climate CSOs are an untapped resource for advocacy and engagement with climate assemblies, but our earlier work shows low levels of understanding and a degree of scepticism amongst these groups. The playbook will help climate CSOs position themselves in relation to climate assemblies, highlighting different roles they can play within or outside the process – and before, during and after an assembly. It will answer the question of how CSOs can capitalise on the potential of the climate assemblies to enable more robust, ambitious and equitable climate policy<sup>21</sup>. A workshop on engaging stakeholders, followed by the publication of a KNOCA Briefing authored by Ines Omann will help us develop more tailored guidance.
- **Civil society commissioned assemblies.** Given the increase in interest amongst CSOs to initiate assemblies, KNOCA will analyse the extent to which specific guidance needs to be produced that differs from government-commissioned assemblies on how to ensure process integrity and how to facilitate and sustain impact.
- **Supporting members post-assembly.** A growing number of assemblies are providing support to assembly members after they have produced their recommendations<sup>22</sup>. Post-assembly activity can include monitoring and scrutiny of actions on their proposals, media work, community organising and other forms of civic action. Following the publication of guidance in this area by Shared Future later this year, KNOCA will investigate the extent to which infrastructure to support post-assembly activity can be constructed and sustained.
- **Evaluation of assemblies.** A revised version of KNOCA's impact evaluation framework<sup>23</sup>, authored by the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST), will be made available before the summer, following piloting and review of the first iteration<sup>24</sup>. Impact is understood in a broad sense across areas of impact (state, non-state and structures/systems) and types of impact (instrumental, conceptual and capacity building). The European Climate Foundation has commissioned a number of impact evaluations of climate assemblies, the results of which will be used to inform KNOCA's future work and further iterations of the framework. KNOCA will collate these evaluations on its new website along with the evaluation instruments used in the field in order to support future evaluation of assembly impact.

## Shaping Future Practice

KNOCA's raison d'être is to improve the commissioning, design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of climate assemblies to secure more robust and legitimate climate policy and governance. The guidance that we are producing and the workshops and learning calls that we are hosting on different aspects of climate assembly practice all contribute to shaping future practice. We have been encouraged to learn that this guidance and events have helped commissioners, practitioners and advocates improve their practices across Europe and beyond.

These public activities are complemented by closed sessions with government, parliamentary and civil society actors to help them develop assembly projects. One of the powerful elements of our network is that we are able to curate closed workshops that enable peer-to-peer learning, where policy officials, practitioners and activists meet others from the same background who have trod the path before them and can provide first-hand knowledge and experience.

Such sessions are time consuming to organise but incredibly rewarding and valuable in diffusing learning across space and time. One anecdote from these sessions: often public officials who have organised climate assemblies speak about how challenging and difficult a process it can be, but always when asked say that they would happily do it again – learning from their mistakes of course.

## A Call to Action

The urgency of mitigating and adapting to climate change is undeniable. Our current political climate makes it clear that we need to do this in ways that draw on the imagination and creativity of citizens. Climate assemblies can make this happen.

Climate assemblies are a promising development in climate governance. While the impacts of, and learnings from, the first wave of assemblies continue to ripple through the system, we have enough understanding of this new form of public participation and deliberation to know that, under the right conditions, they can have significant impact on climate policy and governance. To ensure their promise is fulfilled, we must make sure that the next wave of climate assemblies is *designed with impact*. This is KNOCA's mission.

KNOCA and the European Climate Foundation are open to working with others who share their commitment to co-designing and co-producing the necessary guidance and support to ensure the impact of the next wave of climate assemblies. **Find us at [knoqa.eu](https://knoqa.eu).**

## Endnotes

- 1 The Current Trends report was first published in April 2023. This is the first annual update.
- 2 OECD. 2020. Innovative citizen participation and new democratic institutions: Catching the deliberative wave. Paris: OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/innovative-citizen-participation-and-new-democratic-institutions-339306da-en.htm>. Updated figures from 2023 can be found at <https://medium.com/participo/2023-trends-in-deliberative-democracy-oecd-database-update-c8802935f116>
- 3 See Graham Smith. 2023. Public participation and the updating of NECPs: towards more meaningful dialogue and deliberation. Brussels. European Environmental Bureau. <https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Paper-Graham-Smith.pdf>
- 4 For more detail on the selection process, see FIDE (Foundation for Innovation in Democracy – Europe). 2023. Organising a Democratic Lottery. Brussels: FIDE. <https://www.fide.eu/research-and-documentation/organising-a-democratic-lottery>
- 5 National assemblies and juries have taken place in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Jersey, Luxembourg, Poland, Scotland, Spain, UK. For details of national climate assemblies, see <https://knoca.eu/national-climate-assemblies/>. For a map of climate assemblies, see <https://knoca.eu/map-of-national-assemblies/>
- 6 A KNOCA Briefing on developments in sub-national assemblies will be published in Summer 2024.
- 7 <https://knoca.eu/knoca-learning-call-on-transnational-climate-assemblies/>
- 8 For recordings of KNOCA learning calls and workshops, see <https://knoca.eu/learning-calls-and-workshops/>
- 9 In Finland a shorter Citizens’ Jury was tasked with reviewing proposed government policies
- 10 Jonas Lage, Johannes Thema, Carina Zell-Ziegler, Benjamin Best, Luisa Cordroch, Frauke Wiese, ‘Citizens Call for Sufficiency and Regulation: A Comparison of European Citizen Assemblies and National Energy and Climate Plans’, *Energy Research & Social Science*, 104 (2023): 103254 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2023.103254>
- 11 John Boswell, Rikki Dean and Graham Smith, ‘Integrating Citizen Deliberation into Climate Governance: Lessons on Robust Design from Six Climate Assemblies’. *Public Administration* 101, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12883>
- 12 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-permanent-climate-assemblies>
- 13 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-climate-assemblies-commissioned-by-civil-society>
- 14 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/knoca-workshop-backcasting>
- 15 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-systems-thinking-in-climate-assemblies>
- 16 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-hearing-unheard-voices>
- 17 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-children-and-young-people-in-climate-assemblies>
- 18 These drivers of impact build on the earlier Guidance Document published on this theme <https://knoca.eu/key-drivers-of-impact/>
- 19 <https://www.fide.eu/spring-school-2024>
- 20 KNOCA workshop on communicating climate assemblies <https://knoca.eu/workshop-on-communicating-climate-assemblies-lessons-challenges/>
- 21 Workshop on NGO playbook: why and how should NGOs engage with climate assemblies? <https://knoca.eu/event/workshop-on-ngo-playbook-why-and-how-should-climate-ngos-engage-with-climate-assemblies/>
- 22 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-the-follow-up-to-climate-assemblies>
- 23 <https://knoca.eu/impact-evaluation-framework/>
- 24 <https://www.knoca.eu/events/workshop-on-evaluating-the-impact-of-assemblies>

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