

Permanent **CITIZEN DIALOGUE** in East Belgium



Bürgerdialog
in Ostbelgien

background, short description, state of play

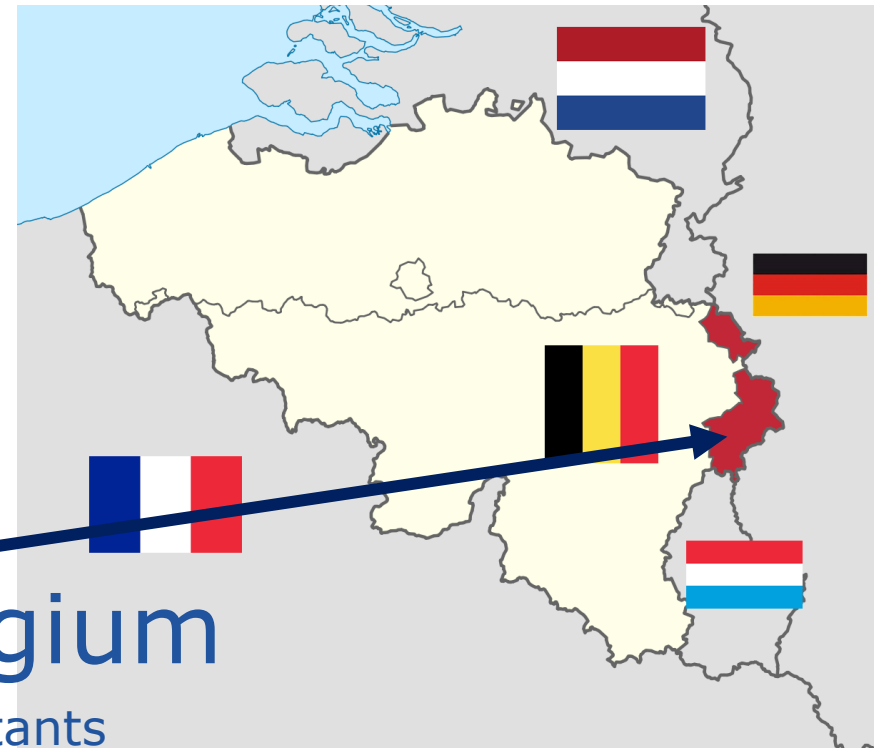
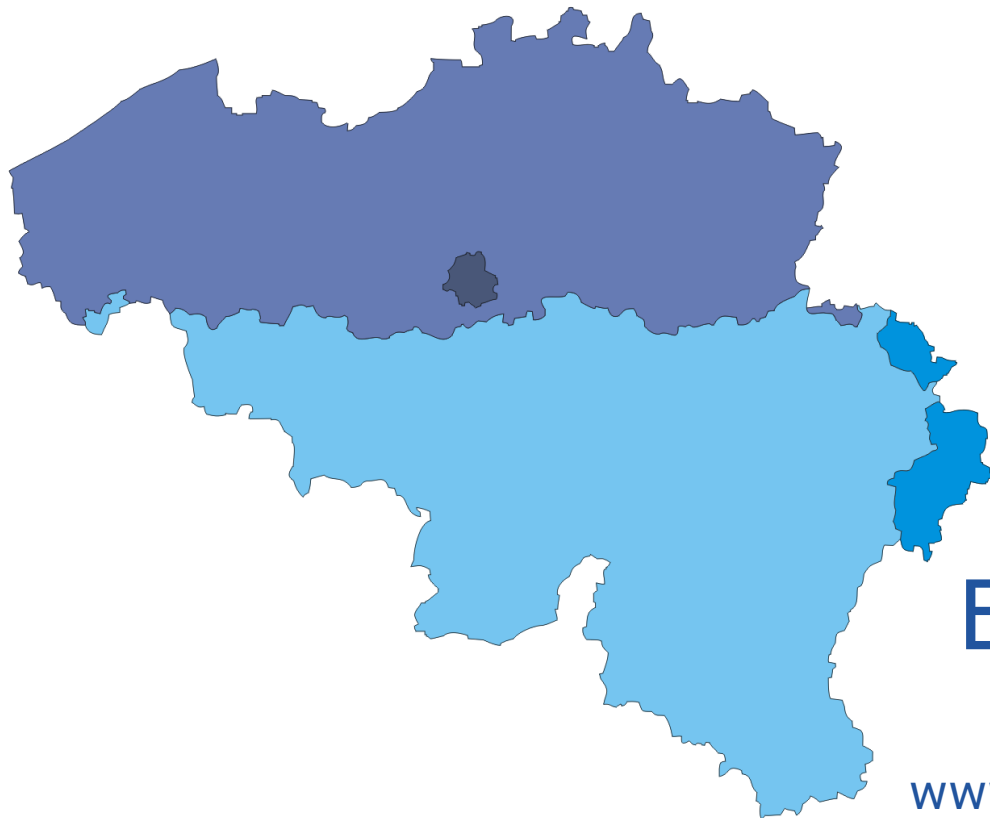
Content

- **CONTEXT**
- **BACKGROUND:** Motivation; History
- **MODEL:** Bodies & participants; Timing; Follow-up; 3 Pillars
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** Sortition; Agenda Setting; State of play
- **CONCLUSIONS**

Context: East Belgium

A self-governed minority

in a border region



East Belgium

77,500 inhabitants

www.ostbelgienstatistik.be

Pol. competences

- Culture, youth, sports, ...
- Social, public health
- Education
- Employment
- Housing, ...



The Parliament

- Responsible for legislation
- Since 1973
- 25 deputies
- 6 pol. groups



Motivation

- **Why?** In Europe: distrust in politics (e.g. voter participation) → prepare East Belg. for future
- **2 objectives:**
 - Actively involve citizens via institutionalisation
 - Enhance the comprehension of pol. decisions to strengthen democracy & institutions
- **How? Dialogue!**
 - Citizens learn how politicians work
 - Politicians learn what is important to citizens



History

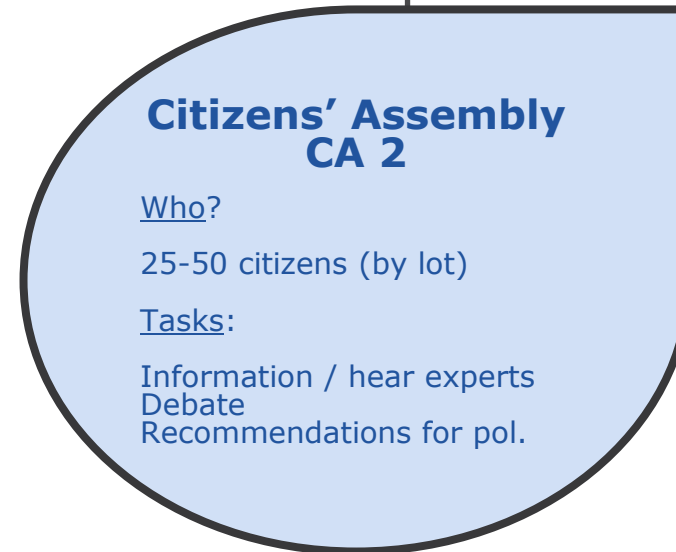
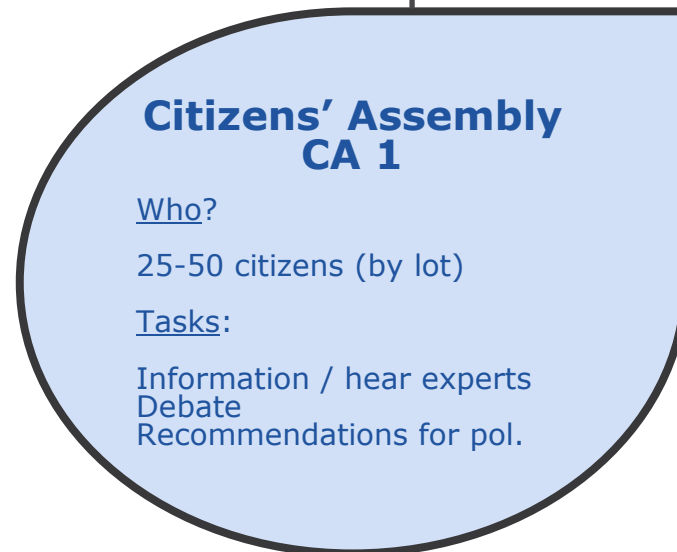
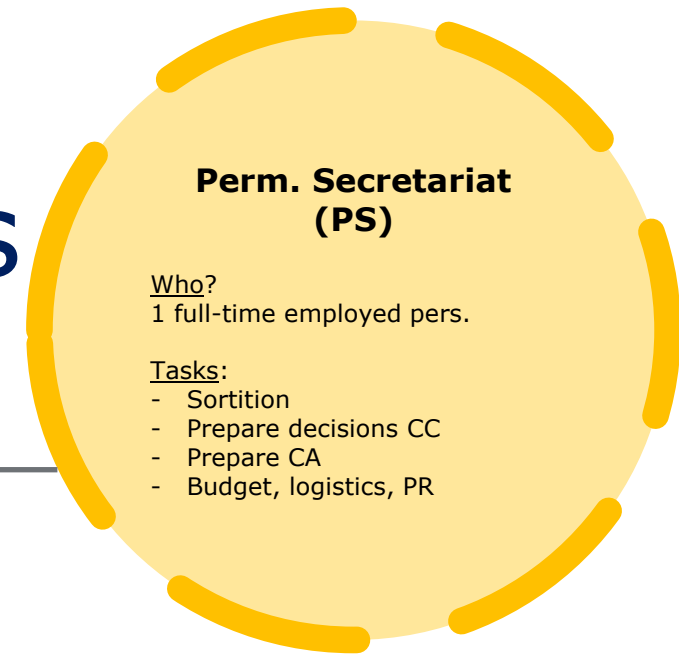
- Test project: child care (autumn 2017)
- Int. team of experts elaborates the „**Ostbelgien-Model**“ (Spring 2018)



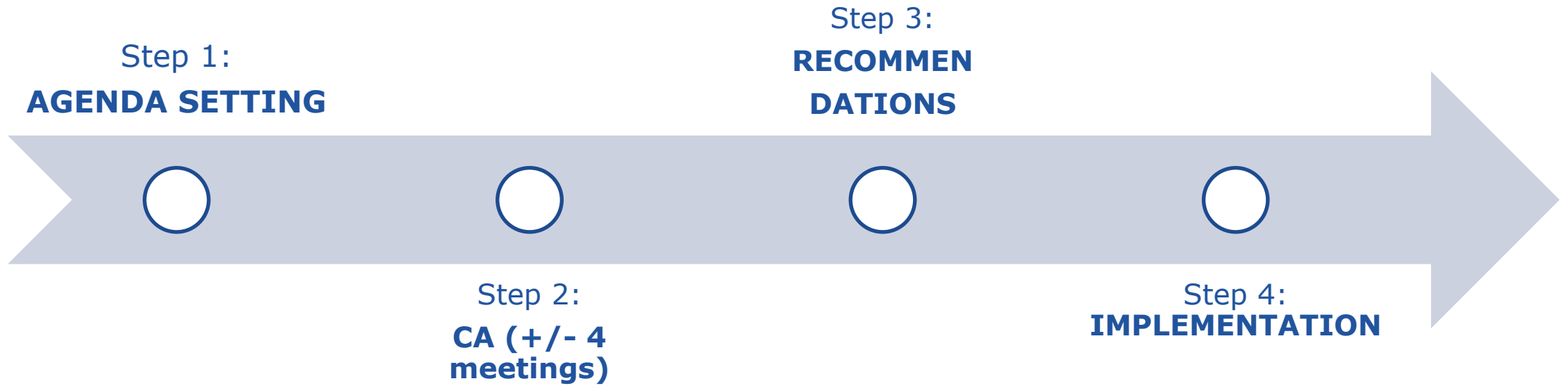
- Parliament adopts law:
Dekret zur Einführung eines perm. Bürgerdialogs
in der DG (February 2019)



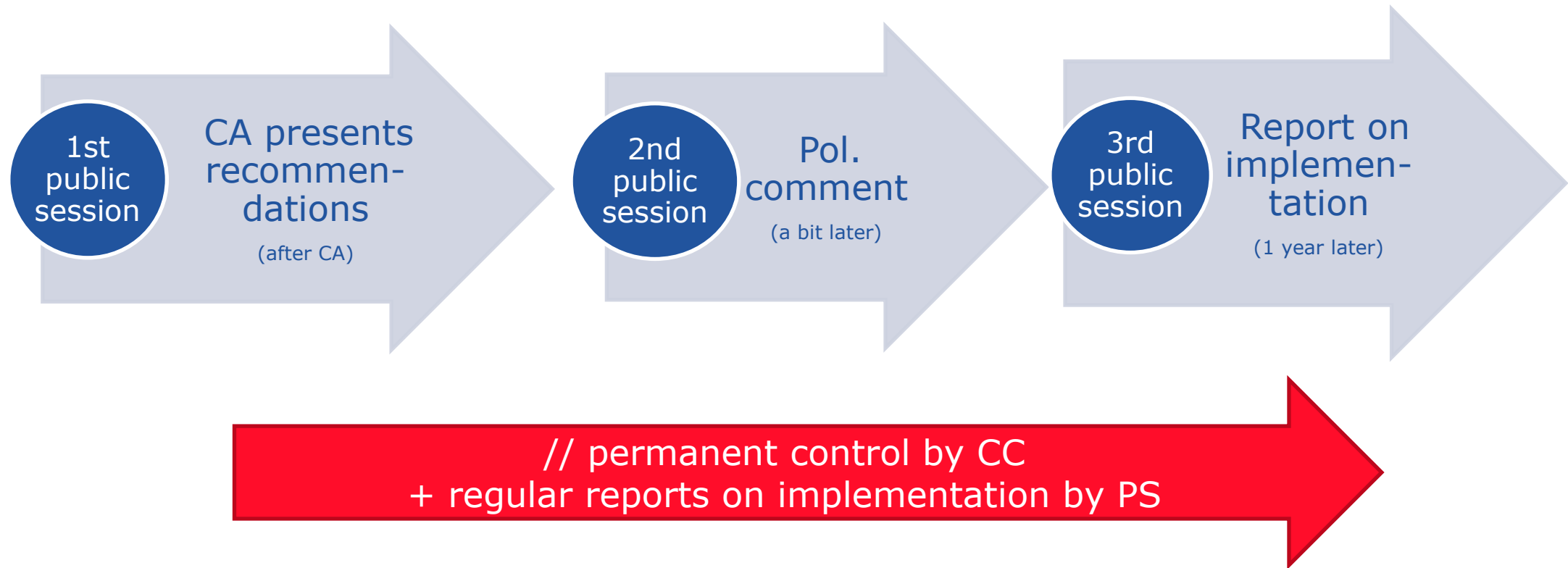
Bodies & Participants



Timing



Follow-up



3 Pillars



STABILITY	REPRESENTATIVITY	QUALITY
of the Dialogue	of the Assemblies	of the deliberation process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens's Council • Permanent Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sortition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation • Information of citizens (full knowledge of the facts) • Transparent + constructive exchange with politicians

Sortition process



Timing	Number	Method
1st step	1000 citizens	Random selection
feedback	115 wanted to participate (142 did not want to p.)	Self selectoin
2nd step	12 citizens	Criteria with quotes

gender (m/f)
age
geographical origin (N/S)
Education level (socio-econ.
Background)

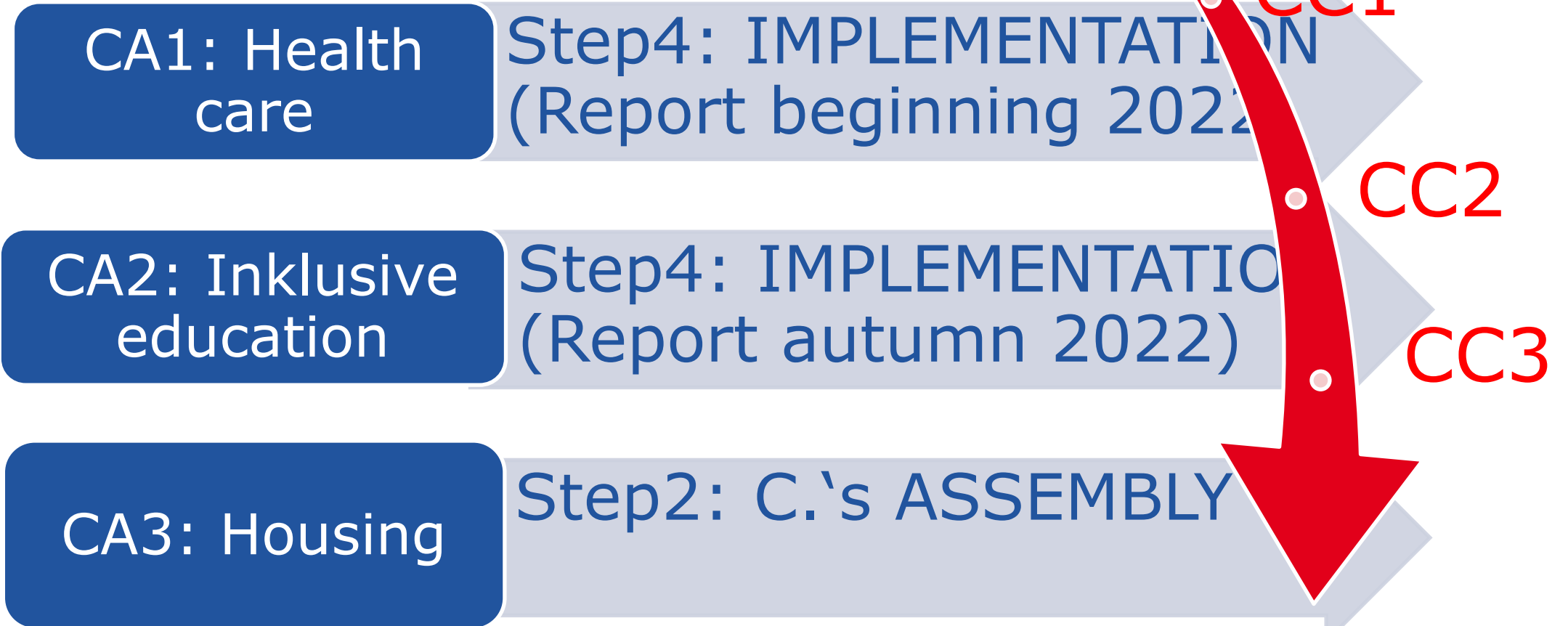
Agenda setting

- **Topic not defined by politics**
CC decides
- **Public Call**
 - All inhabitants (min. 100 signatures)
! Possibility to involve large public
 - Members of the CC (min. 2 members)
 - Parliament / government (max. 3 per year)
- **When?**
 - Spring: Call
 - September (after gvmt declaration): CC choses for coming year
- **In real?**
 - 1st call: 23 proposals, 3 topics with many signatures (health care, inclusive, education, elderly poverty)



Concl.: challenge of political competences

State of play



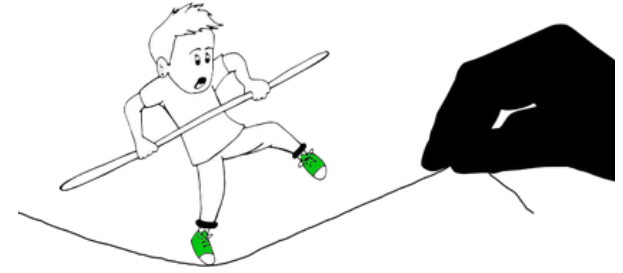
We dare: first conclusions

1st topic still running, but until now the model stands the test:

- 😊 sortition process, deliberative method
- 😊 new members in CC contribute experience
- 😊 permanent aspect
- 😊 follow-up method (but in practice?)




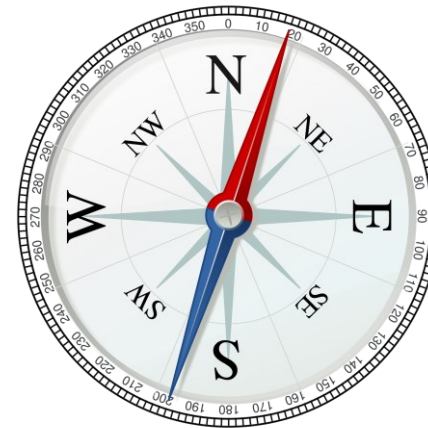
Challenges



- **How to get qualitative topic proposals from citizens?**
 - Pol. competences not known
- **How many assemblies?**
 - Public is waiting for results >< CC / politicians have to deal with many topics at once
- **How to organise dialogue?**
 - Involve large public >< informal meetings enable citizens to speak up

So...?

- **Theoretical model on road test**
 - Evaluation planned for spring 2022
- **1st topic only concluded in January 2022**
 - First experiences of CC2 to follow up recommendations
- **For sure: Compass for politicians**
 - Topic proposals, recommendations
 -  What is important to citizens?



Questions?

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