



75 Jahre
Demokratie
lebendig



Bürgerrat Ernährung
des Deutschen Bundestages

Recommendations to the German Bundestag Citizens' Assembly "Nutrition in Transition" Berlin, 14 January 2024

Between 29 September 2023 and 14 January 2024, the participants of the first Citizens' Assembly of the German Bundestag took part in a total of six online and three face-to-face meetings to discuss the topic of "Nutrition in Transition: between a private matter and governmental responsibilities".

Citizens' recommendations to the German Bundestag can be found below. These recommendations were approved during the last session from 12 to 14 January 2024 in Berlin. The first step was to ask for approval (Yes / No / Abstention) and then prioritise all recommendations that received at least 50 percent of approval from the citizens present. Participants were able to prioritise up to nine recommendations.

For each recommendation, the level of approval (Yes / No / Abstention) and the level of prioritisation (average of all votes cast from 1 - not at all important to 6 - very important) are indicated.

The final recommendations are listed in order of prioritisation by the participants, starting with the recommendations that were most important to the participants. In section 2 you will also find a recommendation that was largely agreed with but did not reach the top nine in the prioritisation process.



I. Overview

The nine recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly "Nutrition in transition"

The nine highest prioritised recommendations that have been approved by at least half of the Citizens' Assembly.

1. Investing in the future: Free lunch for all children as the key to educational opportunities and health
2. Responsible grocery shopping made easy through a mandatory national label
3. Mandatory redistribution of leftover edible food by food retailers
4. Transparent reporting of the living conditions and origin of animals
5. Supporting over demanding – A new tax regime for food
6. Healthy, balanced and tailored community catering in hospitals, rehabilitation, retirement and other care facilities
7. A consumption levy to promote animal welfare
8. Age limit for energy drinks
9. More personnel for food inspections and better transparency of the results for the wider public

Cross-sectional recommendation on all recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

Raising awareness and education as the foundation for all recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly

Further recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

Additional recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly, which were largely approved but not selected as one of the nine most important recommendations.

Raising awareness in private households – Don't give food waste a chance

Rejected proposals

Recommendations which did not receive the majority approval of the Citizens' Assembly.

Tiered producer levy for all sugary drinks and drinks with sweeteners

Incentive tax or producer levy on sugary drinks - no thanks!
We need alternative measures instead

II. Detailed Recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

The nine recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly are listed below in order of prioritisation (from most important to least important).

1. Recommendation 1 (Free lunches for all children)

Title

Investing in the future: Free lunch for all children as the key to educational opportunities and health



Action

We are recommending the provision of free, healthy lunches for all children and young people in day-care centres and schools throughout Germany.

As the minimum requirement, the catering should be based on the DGE quality standards. Funding should be provided on a permanent basis for the use of at least 30% ecologically produced (organic) food. Additionally, it would be desirable that the food is sourced regionally and seasonally (climate-friendly).

At least half of the measure is to be financed by the federal government. Funding for the measure can come from the "Education and Participation" programme, which currently only allows children at risk of poverty to receive free lunch. It is also possible to reallocate funds intended for the increase in child benefit for the programme. This means that instead of increasing the child benefit sum, the resulting saved funds will be used to provide free meals. Funds from existing funding programmes in the federal states and municipalities with similar objectives are also to be reallocated to this nationwide programme.

The measure is to be implemented in stages for all age groups within eight years at the latest, starting with the youngest age group: First in day-care centres, two years later in primary schools, again two years later in lower secondary school classes and a further two years later in upper secondary school classes.

The respective teaching staff should also be included in the measure.

Justification

Free and healthy lunches at day-care centres and schools are aimed at achieving several goals:

- They aim to promote children's healthy nutrition and to counteract malnutrition. Good and healthy nutrition is important for children's well-being, as well as physical and mental development – and thus important for the rest of their lives.
- They aim to facilitate equal opportunities amongst children, as healthy food is often too expensive for lower-income families. However, this measure should not only be aimed at

low-income households, in order to protect children from stigmatisation and to promote an element of community.

- The measure relieves parents of the burden of having to provide meals for their children every day.
- Food in schools is a contribution to education because it teaches children what good nutrition entails. This can have a positive impact on their future nutrition habits. Especially with small children, the potential to influence nutritional patterns is huge.
- Eating together can also promote a child's social development and teach it a communal eating culture. If the teachers and educators participate in the meals and eat the same food, acceptance increases. In addition, the duty of supervision is guaranteed, and social interaction takes place outside the classroom.
- The general healthcare system is relieved in the short term and sustainably.

Voting results

Approval

Yes: 87,6%

No: 11,5%

Abstention: 0,9%

Rank of prioritisation: 4,88

2. Recommendation 2 (Responsible grocery shopping made easy through a mandatory government label)

Title

Responsible grocery shopping made easy through a mandatory government label



Action

We need a mandatory national label for all products sold in Germany and the European Union.

The label should have a simple design and be accompanied by an information campaign to ensure acceptance among consumers. It should take no more than three seconds to recognise whether the food is safe.

The label should take into account the areas of climate, animal welfare and health individually and should be scientifically sound. The climate area should be based exclusively on the criterion of greenhouse gas emissions when the label is introduced.

In the next three to a maximum of five years, environmental aspects (e.g. protection of resources and biodiversity) should be added to the label. The aspect of animal welfare should be based on the recommendation on the animal welfare label. The aspect of health should be based on the degree of food safety (e.g. sugar, fat, salt, additives, degree of processing).

The size and placement of the certified label on the front of the product should ensure that it is easily recognisable. All other non-governmental labels may only be displayed on the back. A note on the label (e.g. QR code) should make further information on the categorisation digitally accessible. The label should be differentiable (recognisable gradations within the three categories) and applicable to different products.

The Bundestag favours the mandatory introduction of this label throughout the EU. In Germany, it should already be introduced voluntarily or - as soon as legally feasible - be made mandatory as soon as possible. We would like Germany to take on a pioneering role by introducing this type of label, with the long-term goal of incentivising other EU countries to introduce the label, similar to the system for labelling eggs.

We recommend rewarding producers who obtain certification (for the transitional period of 1-2 years) and monitoring and sanctioning violations with fair, noticeable fines once the label becomes mandatory.

Existing controlling mechanisms/institutions of other existing labels should be included in the control process. Imported products that do not carry the label should be labelled as imported products, similar to the labelling of honey. Labelling the origin of the product will be central.

Justification

We aim for the label to provide consumers with more transparency to help them make healthier food decisions and more conscious purchases. This process should improve the quality of products in the retail sector, as the label incentivises the food industry to improve in the various label categories.

The label is designed to improve and simplify the comparison of products. This will promote health awareness and increase the appreciation of food, particularly with regards to cost awareness and food waste.

The label should also help to better recognise non-healthy and climate-damaging products and thereby reduce the overall consumption of these products.

A scientific foundation and monitoring of the label creates more trust in the product. A mandatory government label has less potential to be influenced by the industry.

An obligation is the only way to ensure that the label is introduced everywhere and that the above-mentioned objectives are achieved. This will also counteract the influence of advertising and the lack of transparency caused by the many private labels.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 88.5%

No: 10.6%

Abstention: 0.9%

Prioritisation: 4.76

3. Recommendation 3 (Mandatory distribution of leftover edible food by food retailers)

Title

Mandatory redistribution of leftover edible food by food retailers



Action

Supermarkets and other food shops with a sales area of 400 square metres or more should be required to redistribute leftover edible food to non-profit organisations (e.g. food banks) and for charitable purposes.

The definition of edibility should not only be based on the best-before date, but also on other customary quality criteria (e.g. visual inspection).

Supermarkets and other food shops should be fined if they turn food inedible or discard food that is still edible.

Justification

Resources which have been used for the production of food should not be wasted, as many resources are limited.

It is also unethical to dispose of food that is edible while people are subjected to hunger. Therefore, the mandatory food redistribution should be implemented. It will reduce food waste and prevent subsequent problems such as dumpster diving.

The new regulations should be formulated in a way that the individual stakeholders (retailers, non-profit organisations, consumers) are not overburdened by too much bureaucracy or requirements in practice. Instead, the aim is to create a legally secure framework that does not disadvantage the stakeholders (especially in terms of liability) and is conducive to the implementation of the initiative.

The aim of our recommendation is to ensure that as little edible food as possible is wasted. The specific formulation of the laws and regulations (liability issues, etc.) should serve this purpose. Food redistribution, which already works well today, should be maintained and expanded.

The 400 square metre minimum size protects small retailers and non-profit organisations from unnecessary burdens. If there is a reasonable implementation option for smaller retailers, the minimum size can be adjusted.

The financial penalty aims to ensure that the initiative is actually implemented. The amount of the financial penalty and the monitoring should be further specified by experts.

The French system can serve as an example for this initiative. Any weaknesses identified in the French system should be improved.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 84,1%

No: 12,4%

Abstention: 3,5%

Prioritisation: 4,54

4. Recommendation 4 (Transparent reporting of the living conditions and origin of animals)

Title

Transparent reporting of the living conditions and origin of animals



Action

A mandatory and government-controlled holistic animal welfare label should illustrate the entire life cycle of farm animals. This includes birth, rearing, farming, transport (transport routes and transport conditions) and slaughter. The corresponding federal state (Bundesland) must be specified for all stations.

The recommended actions need to cover fresh meat, packaged meat and processed meat products such as sausages. This also applies to fish and fish products.

The label must be clearly visible on the front, clearly understandable and mandatory for all types of animals.

The label for animal products used in gastronomy, canteens, kindergartens, schools, hospitals and care facilities has to be provided at least on request.

Imported goods must at least be labelled with the country of origin, as it is already the case for fruit and vegetables.

Justification

Consumers should be able to recognise differences through the government-controlled, informative label and be able to make their purchasing decisions on this basis.

The label enables consumers to act more responsibly.

The mandatory labelling serves as an incentive for producers, suppliers, retailers and restaurants to provide higher-quality meat.

The national label recommended by us can generate a competitive advantage for German agriculture in relation to products imported from abroad.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 81,4%

No: 15,9%

Abstention: 2,7%

Prioritisation: 4,48

5. Recommendation 5 (Supporting over demanding – A new tax regime for food)

Title

Supporting over demanding – A new tax regime for food



Action

As society has evolved, the current definition of staple foods has become outdated. As a result, a new and simplified definition is required in certain areas. This new definition should take into account food items that are vegan, vegetarian, climate-friendly, produced according to organic standards and which are healthy. The different forms of nutrition should therefore be treated equally.

Specific examples of new staple foods include

- Plant-based milk substitutes
- Meat substitutes
- All products produced according to organic standards.

As part of the measure to improve a healthy diet, we recommend adjusting the tax on the following products to 0% VAT:

- Unprocessed fruit and vegetables from the EU with organic quality
- Frozen fruit and vegetables with organic quality
- Class 2 fruit and vegetables (not meeting the aesthetic standard)
- Pulses, nuts and wholemeal cereals
- Mineral water and table water.

We also recommend a reclassification of the staple food sugar. The raw material sugar, regardless of its origin or form of production, should no longer be classified as a staple food and therefore VAT should be adjusted to 19%.

If an animal welfare fee will not be adopted, we recommend reorganising the taxation of meat. This should involve meat

- In husbandry forms 1 and 2 being taxed at 19% VAT
- In husbandry forms 3, 4 (and organic) and meat substitute products being taxed at 7% VAT.

Justification

We want to achieve healthy, environmentally and climate-friendly, animal-friendly and affordable food for everyone by regulating the taxes. A primary goal of our actions is to improve the overall health of the population and thereby reduce the impact on the healthcare system in terms of nutrition. This will result in drastic savings in healthcare costs.

We are relying on consumers taking their personal responsibility seriously and assume that the incentives created by the change in VAT will make healthier food choices more attractive.

The principle is to support rather than to demand!

The loss of revenue as a result of the reduction in VAT rates for healthy food will be compensated by the additional revenue from VAT rates for non-healthy food and the enormous savings in the healthcare system.

In addition, the reorganisation of VAT will improve the sustainable cultivation of organic plant products and animal husbandry. This will also benefit the climate.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 72,6%

No: 20,4%

Abstention: 7,1%

(Deviation from 100% due to rounding)

Prioritisation: 4,46

6. Recommendation 6 (Healthy, balanced and tailored community catering in hospitals, rehabilitation, retirement and other care facilities)



Title

Healthy, balanced and tailored community catering in hospitals, rehabilitation, retirement and other care facilities

Action

We recommend that access to healthy and balanced nutrition in hospitals, rehabilitation centres, retirement homes and other care facilities (hereinafter referred to as care facilities) be guaranteed for everyone. Nutrition should be tailored to the individual needs of different target groups in care facilities.

This includes

- **The standardisation of nutritional quality:** All care facilities are obliged to meet at least the quality standards of the German Nutrition Society (DGE). Wherever possible, the Medical Service of the Health Insurance Funds will monitor these standards.
- **Mandatory introduction of the DGE standards in quality management systems:** The introduction of the DGE quality standards into a quality management system should be mandatory in every care facility to ensure that compliance is continuously monitored by the care facility itself and readjusted if necessary. The special needs of different care facilities will be taken into account. The inclusion of nutrition in the quality management system will increase the awareness on the topic of nutrition and increase the transparency of costs and quality of nutrition in care facilities.
- **Financial security:** The federal government should ensure and, if necessary, establish the necessary legal and financial framework to guarantee a healthy nutrition according to the DGE quality standards in care facilities.
 - First, a **standardised minimum amount for daily expenditure** on nutrition per client should be defined and implemented in all care facilities to ensure compliance with DGE quality standards.
 - Second, social insurance should guarantee that **costs are covered by the service providers** and that nutrition is adequately funded.
 - Third, the **percentage of care rates** used to finance nutrition should be made **transparent** in all care facilities.
 - Fourth, the **budgeting in hospitals should reflect nutrition under healthcare costs** and not under other costs (e.g. information technology). By separating nutrition costs from other administrative costs, the central role of nutrition for health will be emphasised.
- Where possible, compliance with the DGE quality standards should be implemented without the provision of additional tax funds and higher health and care insurance

contributions. Otherwise, the Bundestag should decide on the provision of additional funds.

- **Sufficient specialised personnel:** In order to implement the DGE quality standards, the federal government ensures that care facilities employ, train and further educate sufficiently qualified personnel. This includes nutritional advisors as well as nursing and catering personnel.

Justification

A healthy, balanced nutrition that is tailored to individual needs is crucial for a comprehensive state of well-being and a rapid recovery in the event of illness. Nutrition is healthcare, because illnesses are often diet-related. A healthy nutrition helps to maintain and improve the state of health. Food should be enjoyable.

In many cases, the quality of nutrition in care facilities does not meet these requirements currently. Compliance with the recognised DGE quality standards enables needs-oriented and healthy nutrition in these various care facilities. As a legislator and funder, the federal government has a central role in ensuring the quality of nutrition in care facilities. It should take appropriate measures to ensure that care facilities must and can fulfil the DGE quality standards.

Quality nutrition is so important to us that the necessary funding must be provided to implement the DGE quality standards. Funding should be implemented in a socially sustainable way and with as little burden as possible on taxpayers and clients.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 84,1%

No: 11,5%

Abstention: 4,4%

Prioritisation: 4,32

7. Recommendation 7 (A consumption levy to promote animal welfare)

Title

A consumption levy to promote animal welfare



Action

We are recommending an earmarked consumption levy on animal products to finance the reorganisation of species-appropriate farming. The revenue from the consumption levy should be used as an animal welfare subsidy that agricultural producers receive on an ongoing basis if they improve their animal husbandry methods.

This means that the better the husbandry system, the higher the premium should be.

In addition to a one-off subsidy for the conversion and new construction of stables to improve the form of husbandry, agricultural businesses with husbandry level 2 and higher should also receive regular support.

The amount of the levy is to be based on the recommendations of the Borchert Commission. This corresponds to around EUR 0.40 per kg of meat and processed meat products, EUR 0.02 per egg and litre of milk or fresh dairy products and EUR 0.15 per kg of cheese, butter and milk powder.

The levy on animal products produced in lower husbandry systems should be higher in comparison to animal products produced in higher husbandry systems. The state should therefore extend the labelling of animal husbandry to other animal species than pigs as soon as possible.

Small farms should receive special support for the implementation of animal welfare standards.

This measure is intended to ensure long-term planning and legal certainty for agricultural businesses.

Justification

These measures are necessary to support farms and provide them with an incentive to upgrade to higher forms of husbandry. This should ensure long-term planning and legal certainty for agricultural businesses.

The aim should be to reduce intensive livestock farming and promote extensive livestock farming, in order to improve the status quo. In the long term, animal husbandry at a higher level of animal welfare also helps to protect the climate and the environment.

In addition, this recommendation ensures a reduction in the use of antibiotics and helps to prevent antibiotic resistance.

Farm-based agriculture is important to us. For smaller farms, the necessary investments in better forms of husbandry are proportionally more expensive and more difficult to realise. For this reason, specific support is essential to ensure that greater animal welfare does not lead to even stronger concentration in agriculture.

The measures ensure that Sections 2 and 2a of the Animal Welfare Act (species-appropriate animal husbandry) are met.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 70,8%

No: 24,8%

Abstention: 4,4%

Prioritisation: 4,08

8. Recommendation 8 (Age limit for energy drinks)

Title

Age limit for energy drinks



Action

We are recommending the introduction of an age limit for energy drinks and similar products, such as energy boosters. The definition of energy drinks can be found in the Ordinance on Fruit Juice, Fruit Nectar and Caffeinated Soft Drinks issued by the Federal Ministry of Justice.

The age limit must be at least 16 years. The age limit should be raised to 18 years if this is recommended by an independent scientific advisory board.

In addition, clearly recognisable and clearly distinguishable warnings in colour should be displayed on the front of the products to indicate the health risks of the ingredients.

The age limit is to be ensured by conducting age checks at all points of retail, including online shops. Operators of vending machines must ensure that the age limit is respected. If this is not technically feasible, these drinks may not be sold.

Justification

We are in favour of an age limit for energy drinks in order to guarantee the statutory protection of children and young people. The potential for health damage and addiction is just as serious as with cigarettes and alcohol.

An age limit of 16 years is supported by the fact that wine and beer are also permitted from the age of 16. More difficult to justify is therefore a higher age limit.

An increase of the age limit to 18 years should be analysed scientifically as the development of the brain is not yet finalised until the age of 18.

Warning labels should act as a deterrent for children and adolescents as well as adults.

Energy drinks are known to contain ingredients such as caffeine and taurine which, in interaction and dosage, have negative effects on the mental and physical development of children and adolescents.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 79,6%

No: 15,0%

Abstention: 5,3%

(Deviation from 100% due to rounding)

Prioritisation: 3,89

9. Recommendation 9 (More personnel for food inspections)

Title

More personnel for food inspections and better transparency of the results for the wider public



Action

We are recommending the amendment of the regulations for food inspectors. This includes the incorporation of EU regulations and standards and reflecting the density of duties.

In order to attract more personnel for the task of food inspection, we recommend that the entry requirements for the two-year training programme for food inspectors should be simplified. In order to increase the number of inspections, access should not only be granted to people with a master craftsman's certificate in future. The quality of the inspections must not be negatively affected. Furthermore, the work should be both appropriately rewarded and valued.

The results of inspections from the field to the plate, i.e., in the manufacturing and processing facilities for food, consumer goods, or cosmetic products, in retail or at border control points, in catering establishments and communal catering facilities, should be made available to the public in a simple and easily visible manner (e.g., through the use of emojis or a traffic light system). For this purpose, a legal framework must finally be established.

Justification

- Ensuring the quality of food is of fundamental importance for the health and well-being of the population. To achieve this goal, effective food control and transparent communication of the results of these controls are essential.
- The aim is to better enforce existing EU regulations and standards.
- Otherwise, there is insufficient control, posing an increased health risk to the population.
- The measures should contribute to the detection of violations of regulations and standards by official authorities rather than by animal welfare organisations or independent actors. Animal welfare is particularly important to us.
- Trust in governmental inspections should be strengthened.

Transparency for citizens, whether businesses and restaurants comply with legal standards, should be increased. The goal should be to reduce the number of complaints.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 77,9%

No: 16,8%

Abstention: 5,3%

Prioritisation: 3,76

III. Cross-sectional recommendation on all recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

Cross-sectional recommendation (Raising awareness and education as the foundation for all recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly)



Title

Raising awareness and education as the foundation for all recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly

The topic of education and nutrition was discussed extensively and intensively in the Citizens' Assembly. In these discussions, it became obvious that all of the Citizens' Assembly's recommendations need to be accompanied by awareness raising and education. The Citizens' Assembly sees education as a comprehensive task that affects all areas of life. Irrespective of political responsibilities, we decided in favour of one independent, cross-sectoral recommendation.

Action

State-initiated information should be provided on all of the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.

In particular, we see a need for information on:

- Affordable, healthy nutrition
- Consequences of poor nutrition
- Origin and supply chains
- Labelling and labels
- Food waste in private households
- Animal welfare
- Preparation and processing of food.

Information should be provided, for example:

- Through campaigns (e.g. by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Family Affairs)
- Through cooperation with institutions (e.g. health insurance companies, consumer centres, German Food Society (DLG))
- Via the media (e.g. internet, television, radio, newspaper)
- Via celebrities (e.g. influencers, chefs)
- Directly during grocery shopping (e.g. via QR codes).

Education on good food and healthy nutrition should be provided, for example:

- For children and young people through programmes in day-care centres and schools (e.g. through a school subject on nutrition and cooking)

-
- For adults through further training and cooking classes in other educational institutions (e.g. adult education centres)
 - For employees in educational and care facilities.

Justification

Education and information are the foundation for a healthy nutrition.

- Citizens need simple access to information on their food and its consequences for health, the economy and the environment.
- Well-informed citizens contribute to their own and society's general well-being and reduce health costs in the long run.
- Only well-informed, responsible consumers can make balanced and rational purchasing decisions.

Education and information help citizens to increase their awareness of social, intergenerational and global responsibility.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 85,0%

No: 10,6%

Abstention: 4,4% %

IV. Further recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

Additional recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly, which were largely approved but not selected as one of the nine most important recommendations, are presented in the following section

Recommendation (Raising awareness in private households - Don't give food waste a chance)

Title

Raising awareness in private households - Don't give food waste a chance



Action

We are recommending that existing educational programmes, e.g. "Zu gut für die Tonne (Too good for the bin)", be expanded to specific target groups and promoted to the public.

The following target groups should be reached:

- Young people: Via apps ("Too good for the bin") with information about all aspects of shopping, information via existing public broadcaster information channels (e.g. "funk" video offers or Kulturpass app), short clips on YouTube, TikTok etc.
- Parents/families: Display information on websites (of day-care centres, schools, paediatricians, etc.) and provide information on site
- Older people: E.g. flyers, (short) adverts on TV prior to the news
- Across all target groups:
 - Make the public aware of the "10 golden rules against food waste"
 - Cooking programmes and cooking workshops
 - Retailers and supermarkets should take up e.g. the "Too good for the bin" campaign in the form of posters
 - Make photos of food waste more visible (on social media)

The effectiveness of the measures is to be reviewed through accompanying research.

Justification

The majority of avoidable food waste is generated in private households due to a lack of awareness and indifference. Among other things, this concerns the best-before date or the incorrect storage of food. As a result, households throw away an average of approximately EUR 280 worth of food per year.

Citizens do not feel well enough informed on this topic. Therefore, more education is needed.

The "Too good for the bin" awareness campaign against food waste has already been successful, but it is not well enough known. Measures need to be taken in a target group-tailored and widespread approach to further educate people and avoid food waste.

This way, consumers will save money. Valuable resources will be conserved.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 57,5%

No: 32,7%

Abstention: 9,7%

Prioritisation: 3,65

V. Rejected proposals

The recommendations below were not approved by a majority of the Citizens' Assembly, i.e. they did not receive a "Yes" vote from at least 50 per cent of the attending members of the Citizens' Assembly.

Tiered producer levy for all sugary drinks and drinks with sweeteners

Title

Tiered producer levy for all sugary drinks and drinks with sweeteners



Action

We are recommending a tiered producer levy for all sugary drinks and drinks with sweeteners (current and future), which will be adjusted in line with inflation. The levy should start at 5 g of sugar per 100 ml and amount to 21 cents per litre from 5-8 g per 100 ml and 27 cents per litre from a value of over 8 g per 100 ml. If sweeteners are used, regardless of the quantity, the levy is set at 21 cents per litre.

In addition, we are proposing to reduce the price of water (mineral and table water) by lowering VAT to 0%.

The revenues from the levy are to be used for:

- Awareness campaigns on the effects of sugary drinks and drinks with sweeteners on health:
 - Addiction
 - Dental health
 - Demonstrating the benefits of the levy
- A "Water is Awesome" campaign
- General research on the impact of the tiered producer levy:
 - Shifting purchases abroad
 - Reaction of the industry
 - Change in purchasing behaviour with regard to sugary and alcoholic drinks
- The provision of research funding to investigate the effects of sweeteners on health
- The goal of sustainable nutrition, e.g. free school meals

Justification

- Manufacturers should be encouraged to use less sugar and sweeteners in beverages. The aim of the levy is to ensure that more beverages with a sugar content of less than 5g per 100ml are introduced to the market.
- Long-term changes in consumer behaviour should be achieved (purchasing and consumption behaviour, use of healthier alternatives for beverages).

-
- Reducing costs in the healthcare system by avoiding the consequences of sugar consumption on health
 - A lot of sugar and sweeteners are consumed in a very short time through beverages. This favours various diseases (e.g. dental health, diabetes, vascular diseases, obesity, especially among children).
 - Long-term avoidance of the habituation to sweetness in beverages in children

Fruit juices and nectars are also covered by the levy. The amount of sugar in these drinks is significant and tends to be underestimated by the general public. The consumption of undiluted fruit juices and nectars with a large amount of fructose has the same negative effect on the body as the consumption of all other sugary drinks. In addition, after the final processing of fruit juices and nectars, among other things, the natural fibre is no longer present. A 200ml glass of fruit juice would cost around 6 cents more.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 44,2%

No: 51,3%

Abstention: 4,4%

Incentive tax or manufacturer levy on sugary drinks - no thanks!

Title

Incentive tax or manufacturer levy on sugary drinks - no thanks!
We need alternative measures instead



Action

We are not recommending an incentive tax or manufacturer levy on sugary drinks. Instead, alternative measures should be taken to raise awareness of healthy nutrition. These include educational campaigns, improved labelling, e.g. for diabetics, and incentives for companies to offer healthier products.

Justification

A tax or manufacturer levy on sugary drinks interferes with the individual freedom of choice of consumers.

We are aware that a high sugar content in drinks is harmful to health. However, experience from the UK shows that an incentive tax on sugary drinks does not bring any verifiable benefits for the strategic goal of a healthier nutrition. The effects on health caused by alternative sugar substitutes, which may then be added to drinks, have not yet been conclusively researched.

Consumers should have the freedom to decide for themselves what they want to consume. Alternative measures should be taken to raise awareness of healthy nutrition. Consumers have a personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle.

It is also impossible to predict how consumers will react to an incentive tax on sugar-containing drinks. They may switch to alternatives such as syrups and concentrates containing sugar or drinks with sugar substitutes. Replacing sugar-containing drinks with sugar substitutes is not desirable.

An incentive tax on sugary drinks could result in consumers relying too heavily on a government recommendation, as it suggests that the sugar in drinks is the single cause of many diseases.

Levying a tax involves a considerable amount of bureaucracy. It is questionable whether this effort is justified by the possible benefit, i.e. that a tax on sugar-containing drinks would significantly reduce the overall consumption of sugar.

Such a tax could lead to a higher number of consumers shifting their purchases to neighbouring countries, resulting in potential negative effects for companies or retailers in Germany.

Ultimately, such a tax would place an additional burden on us consumers, but especially on people with low incomes and socially disadvantaged groups, as they would have to spend a larger proportion of their finances on food.

Voting results

In favour

Yes: 33,6%

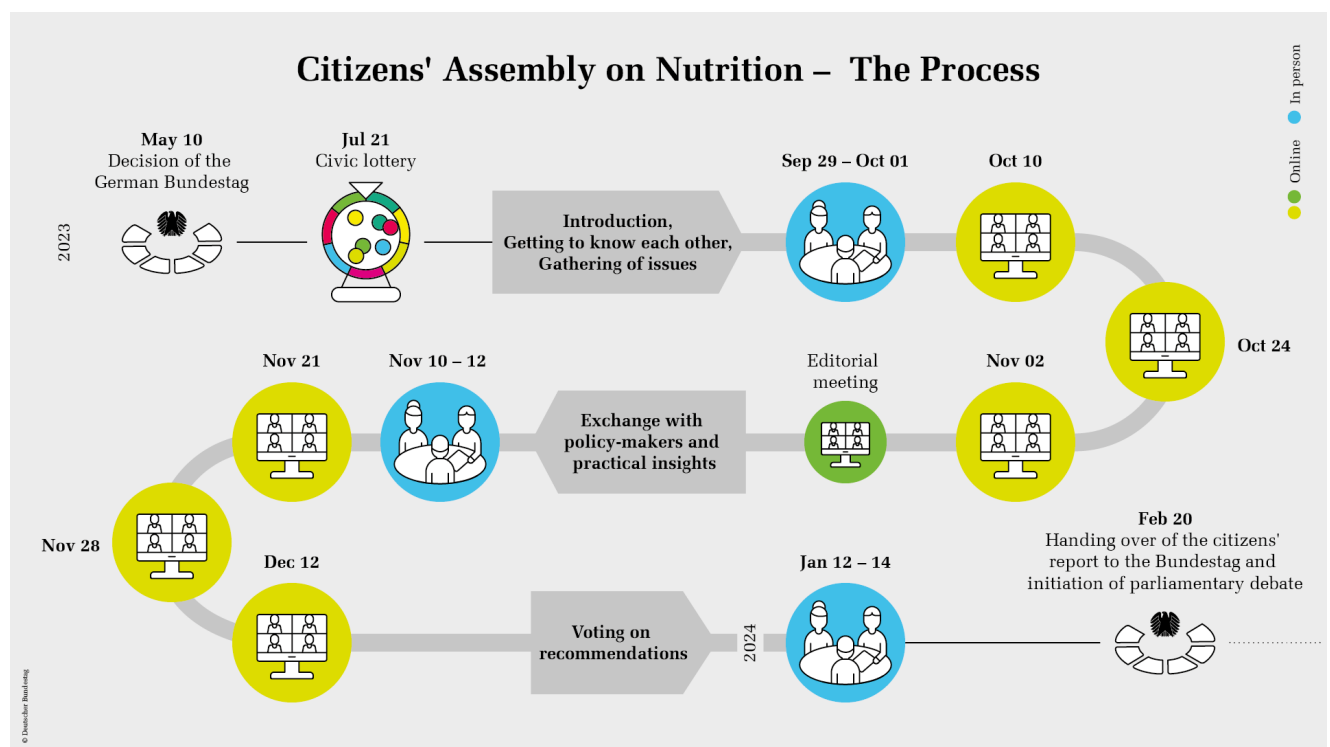
No: 60,2%

Abstention: 6,2%

VI. Background on the Citizens' Assembly on Nutrition

In May 2023, the German Bundestag decided to establish the Citizens' Assembly. You can find the implementation resolution here: <https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/bundestag-sets-up-974720>. The Citizens' Assembly was put together by random selection in order to reflect the diversity of society in the best possible way. You can find more information on the random selection process here in German: <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2023/kw29-buergerrat-lotterie-958134>.

The recommendations were developed during nine meetings held over a period of almost four months. Detailed descriptions of the individual sessions can be found here: https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/citizens_assemblies.



VII. Contact

Deutscher Bundestag
Citizens' Assemblies Project Team

Platz der Republik 1
D - 11011 Berlin

Phone: +49 (0)30 227-32996
Email: buergerraete@bundestag.de