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# Citizen panel Uster for more climate protection

**interim report**

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## imprint

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## Executive Summary

The *Uster citizen panel for more climate protection* was the first deliberative participation process with randomly drawn residents in German-speaking Switzerland. Based on the legislature *objective of promoting the participation of the population* of the government council of the canton of Zurich, the city of Uster agreed to initiate a deliberative participation process on the subject of climate protection. The *Center for Democracy Aarau* provided the scientific support. After a two-stage selection process, twenty randomly and representatively selected residents of the city of Uster discussed possible recommendations for climate protection over two weekends in autumn 2021. From this discussion, the citizens' panel of Uster derived 44 recommendations for the attention of the city council and the population of Uster. The people of Uster were informed about the recommendations via a citizens' letter and a citizens' café and invited to join the discussion.

Citizen panel members are extremely satisfied with the way the process has been conducted and describe their participation as an enriching experience. In addition, they are mostly satisfied with the result of their work. In some cases, the participants would have liked a little more time to discuss individual topics and recommendations in more depth with one another. Respondents to a population survey also have a positive attitude towards the Uster Citizens' Panel. They attest a high level of trust in the Uster citizens' panel and were willing to get involved in a citizens' panel if they were drawn by lot to take part. Two thirds of those questioned agreed with the content of the recommendations of the citizens' panel and judged the recommendations to be useful.

From the authors' point of view, the Uster citizen panel was able to integrate people into the political process who otherwise do not participate politically or only very little. In addition, the citizens' panel made it possible for Uster to involve the population in the discussion about climate protection measures. It is also evident that the citizens' panel of Uster is viewed by those involved as a valuable form of political participation. This brings people with different perspectives into an informed and respectful exchange with each other in order to work out solutions together.

It is currently unclear which recommendations will be implemented by the city of Uster and how. The final report will follow in autumn 2022 and will contain further information on this.

# 1 Introduction

With the 2019-2023 legislature plan, the government council of the Canton of Zurich has set the promotion of public participation as a legislature goal. To this end, the Government Council approved the "Participation" program.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the Canton of Zurich is leading among other things, carried out deliberative participation processes in three communities with a random selection of residents. These participation processes deal thematically with climate protection measures at community level. To date, such deliberative participation processes have only been used in Switzerland in French-speaking Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> The Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs, which is responsible for the "Participation" program, commissioned the Aarau Center for Democracy with the organization and academic support of the first deliberative ones Participation processes with randomly selected residents in German-speaking Switzerland.

The Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs subsequently asked several Zurich municipalities to carry out such a process. The city of Uster was the first municipality to agree to take part. With the adoption of the climate action plan<sup>3</sup> by the Uster municipal council in February 2021, the city of Uster had a good opportunity to invite its residents to a deliberative participation process for discussion and participation in the field of climate protection. As a result, the citizens' panel of Uster for more climate protection, as the process is called, worked out recommendations over two weekends on how the city of Uster can promote climate protection. In the four action areas of *information transfer*, *waste & consumption*, *urban planning* and *mobility*, the citizen panel formulated a total of 44 recommendations. These were then handed over to the Uster City Council, which was communicated to the Uster population in a citizens' letter and presented to the public at a citizens' café. In addition to the official communication, the Center for Democracy Aarau evaluated how the members of the Uster Citizens' Panel and the Uster population judged the process.

The first aim of this interim report is to present the composition and the course of the project of the Uster citizen panel. Second, the results of the survey of the Members of the citizen panel Uster presented. Third, the results of the survey of the population of Uster are discussed. The final report will follow in autumn 2022. Then it can be assessed which recommendations of the citizens' panel the city of Uster will implement and in what form. The methodological procedure is explained in more detail in the following second section. The report is then structured according to the three objectives mentioned above. In the sixth and last section, the statements are summarized and findings for future citizen panels are derived.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zh.ch/de/direktion-der-justiz-und-des-internn/fokus-teilhabe.html> (last accessed on February 23, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, [www.demoscan.ch](http://www.demoscan.ch) or [www.forumcitoyen.ch](http://www.forumcitoyen.ch) (last accessed on February 23, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uster.ch/klimawandel/24866> (last accessed on February 23, 2022)

## 2. Methodology

While the description of the project flow is mainly based on document analysis and process observations, quantitative approaches were used for the surveys of the participants of the Citizen Panel Uster and the general public.

### 2.1 Project flow

On the one hand, the course of the project was evaluated on the basis of an analysis of the following documents: project agreement of the canton of Zurich, official communication of the city of Uster, written input from the participants of the citizens' café and project documents such as the information sheet, the return of the registration forms and the script about the course of the four days of deliberation. On the other hand, the organizational team's observations during the public draw, the four days of deliberation by the citizens' panel and the citizens' café were also included in the evaluation.

### 2.2 Evaluation by the participants

The participants of the Citizen Panel Uster were each at the end of the two asked to fill out an online questionnaire. Some questions regarding the moderation and discussion quality were asked at both times in order to be able to compare the two weekends. While 19 out of 20 people filled out the first questionnaire, 18 out of 20 people answered the second questionnaire. For questions that were asked in both questionnaires, there were a total of 37 answers.

### 2.3 Evaluation of the population survey

In order to investigate how the population of Uster assesses the Citizen Panel of Uster, an online questionnaire was also created. A total of 18,053 households and businesses were given the opportunity to take part in the survey via a short link in the official citizen's letter from the city of Uster. As an incentive, five SBB travel vouchers worth CHF 100 were raffled off among all participants. The citizens' letter, including a short link to participate in the online survey, was sent on October 11, 2021. Despite the mailing to all Uster households and businesses, only 201 people took part in the survey by November 18. This corresponds to a very low response rate of 1.1 percent. Due to this low response, the survey is not representative. However, the results show that both people who gave a positive assessment and people with critical views of the citizen panel took part in the survey. Thus, despite the lack of representativeness, certain insights can be drawn from the survey.

### 3. Project flow

The project phase of the Uster Citizens Panel lasted a total of nine months, from March 2021 to November 2021. Below we will go into the context and the embedding of the Uster Citizens Panel in the existing activities of the city of Uster. We then explain the two-stage draw procedure before going into the content of the two deliberation weekends. This is followed by a description of the citizen café. The chapter concludes with an outlook on the embedding of the results.

#### 3.1 Embedding in the political context and discussion question

On February 2, 2021, the Uster City Council approved the "Climate Action Plan". The action plan contains both measures to limit climate change and measures to adapt to it. The plan thus shows which measures are to be implemented in the city of Uster in the coming years in order to achieve the "net zero" goal by 2050. The federal government has also committed itself to this goal within the framework of the Paris committed to the climate agreement.

As an accompanying measure in the climate action plan, it is planned in particular to involve the population in the implementation. The people of Uster should be able to contribute their own ideas to the discussion about climate protection measures.

That is why the Uster City Council has agreed, in cooperation with the Center for Democracy Aarau and with the financial support of the Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs of the Canton of Zurich to organize the Citizens' Panel Uster. In an exchange between the project managers of the canton of Zurich, the Center for Democracy Aarau and the city of Uster, the following question was defined for the citizen panel:

***"Protect the climate, consume consciously and avoid waste:  
How and why do we want to achieve that in Uster?"***

#### 3.2 Selection - The lottery as a selection mechanism

A two-stage process was used to determine the members of the Uster citizen panel lottery procedure to use. In the first step, the residents' registration office of the city of Uster loosened randomly selected 2,000 addresses of people over the age of 16 from the Uster residents' register. Both Swiss and people with a migration background were therefore taken into account for participation in the Uster citizen panel. At the beginning of May 2021, these 2,000 lucky winners received an official letter with an invitation to participate in the Uster Citizens' Panel, signed by Mayor Barbara Thalmann and City Councilor Karin Fehr. A registration form and an information sheet about the Uster citizen panel were enclosed with the letter of invitation. In it, those who were drawn were informed, among other things, that the

Participation on all four days is compensated with a total of 600 francs and any childcare is organized. Those who were drawn had until May 21 to register for the process. On June 1st, a reminder letter was sent to all those who had neither registered nor unregistered by then to motivate them to participate. until the 13th

A total of 393 people replied on June 1, which corresponds to a return of 19.7 percent.

Of these, 264 people opted out of participating in the citizen panel. The most frequently mentioned reasons for a rejection were lack of time, lack of interest in the question or poor health. 129 people (6.5%) expressed an interest in participating in the Uster citizen panel and registered to take part.

The most frequently mentioned reasons for participation were a great interest in the question, an interest in learning something new and the motivation to be able to influence political decisions outside of party politics.

In a second step, the 129 registered people were invited by letter to a public event at which the members of the Uster Citizens' Panel were drawn by a second lottery. This draw took place on June 23, 2021 in the presence of District President Jacqueline Fehr, City Councilor Karin Fehr and Municipal Council President Anita Borer in the Stadthofsaal in Uster. Using software from the *Sortition Foundation*<sup>5</sup>, a representative group of 20 people was drawn at random based on the following five criteria: *gender, age, education, political views* and *voting frequency*. The aim of this representative draw was that

citizen panel reflects the population of Uster as precisely as possible in relation to these five criteria. A

second representative group of 20 people drawn. The president of the municipal council, Anita Borer, then decided at random which of the two groups would serve as the citizen panel and which would serve as the replacement panel. 6

Figures 1-5 provide an overview of the distribution of the five selection criteria in the population of Uster (Population of Uster), in the registrations received (registered persons), in the citizen panel drawn by lot on June 23, 2021 (persons drawn) and among the members of the citizens' panel, who ultimately took part in the entire process (members of the citizens' panel).<sup>7</sup>

Looking at the distribution of the five criteria among the registered people, it becomes clear that more men than women opted to take part in the Citizen Panel Uster

<sup>5</sup> At 6.5 percent, the positive response rate is higher than the international average, but somewhat lower than in the experiences in Sion and Geneva, where the rate was 10.2 and 12 percent respectively (cf. Geisler & Stojanovic (2020): Citizen Panel in Sion. Scientific Report. University of Geneva).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/>

<sup>7</sup> The draw was recorded: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_N3zaX-TEw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_N3zaX-TEw) (last accessed on February 23, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> The numbers on the voting frequency of the population of Uster come from a study on voter turnout from the city of St. Gallen, see: Serdült, Uwe (2013): Participation as norm and artefact in Swiss voting democracy - Demystification of the average turnout using voter register data from the city of St. Gallen, in: Good, Andrea/Platipodis, Bettina (eds.): Direct Democracy: Challenges between Politics and Law. Festschrift for Andreas Auerzum 65.

Date of birth. Bern, Stämpfli Verlag, 41-50. The data sources for the other four criteria can be found in footnote 11 on page 26.



interested. Likewise were persons between the ages of 20-39 and 40-64 years and such more represented with a university degree. People who belong more to the left of the political spectrum and often or always take part in political votes also showed a higher willingness to participate.

Thanks to the stratified lottery procedure, these distortions could be compensated for.

Only when it came to the question of voting frequency did the distribution in the citizen panel drawn by lots not fully reflect the distribution in the population as a whole. This is due to the fact that too few people who never, rarely or only every other time participate in elections and votes registered. In order to still be able to guarantee a random selection among these people, the quotas had to be set lower. 8th

A total of 3 people who were drawn into the citizen panel revoked their participation in the process. Two people withdrew in the week leading up to the first Citizen Panel weekend, with the withdrawal in one case due to an ordered quarantine related to Covid-19. Due to these very short-term failures, it was not possible to select people with exactly the same characteristics from the replacement panel. This led to a slight shift in the distribution of the criteria of *education*, *political* affiliation and *voting frequency* among the confirmed members of the citizen panel. The citizen panel consisted of a total of 20 people who took part in all four deliberation days.

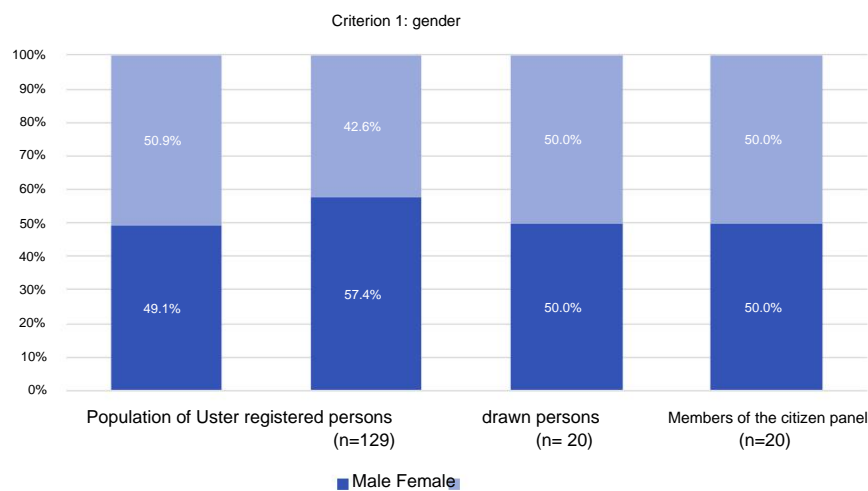


Figure 1: Distribution of the selection criterion "gender"

\* See Appendix 1 for an overview of the set quotas for the second stratified lottery.

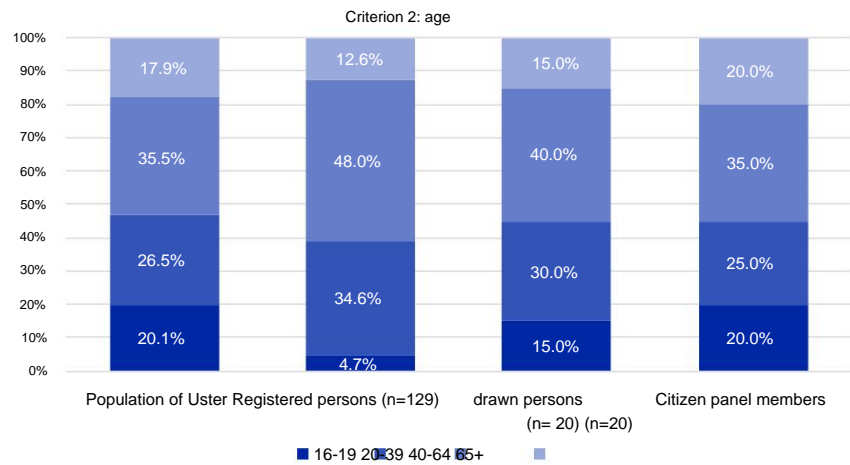


Figure 2: Distribution of the selection criterion "age"

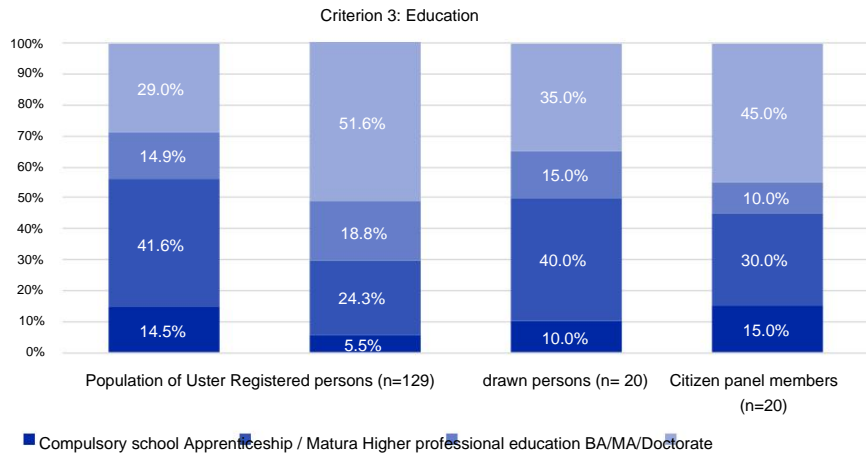


Figure 3: Distribution of the selection criterion "education"

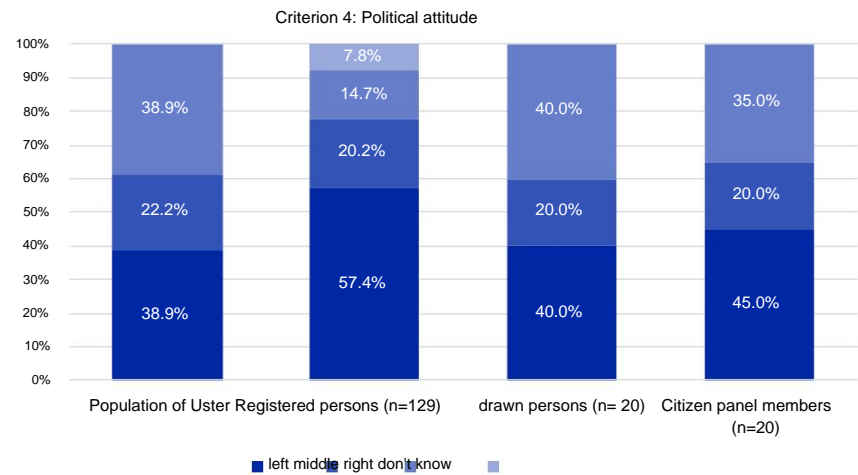


Figure 4: Distribution of the selection criterion "political attitude"

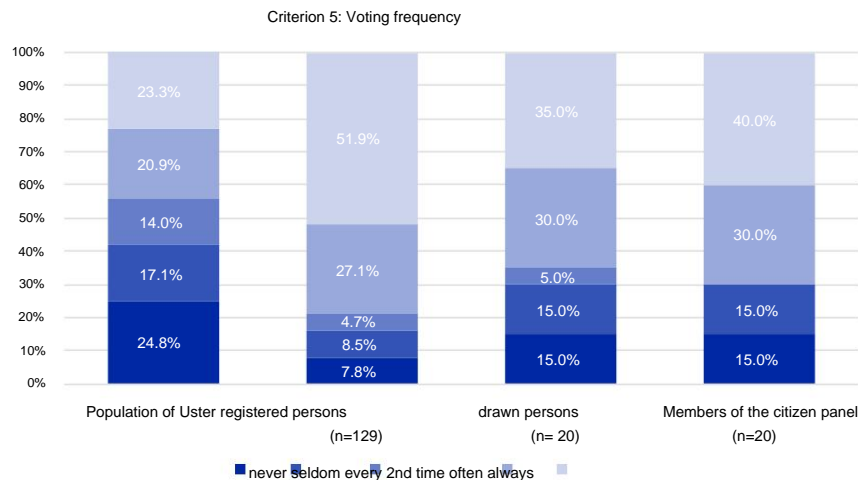


Figure 5: Distribution of the selection criterion "voting frequency"

### 3.3 Deliberation

The Citizens' Panel of Uster met on two weekends in the rainbow hall of the reformed parish of Uster (28/29 August 2021 & 11/12 September 2021). It was possible to follow the process as an observer. A total of 6 people took advantage of this opportunity over the two weekends, two of whom were journalists.

The deliberation process was divided into four phases: The first phase was the Training phase in which the members of the citizens' panel were introduced to the principles and processes of the citizens' panel and dealt with the issue. In the second phase, the participants were able to ask experts about climate protection. The third phase was the deliberation phase, in which the members of the citizen panel exchanged ideas with each other, contributed their opinions to the discussion and jointly developed recommendations. The fourth and final phase was the decision-making phase, during which the members of the citizen panel wrote the final report and voted on which recommendations were included in the final report. The entire process was moderated by an experienced moderation team from *e7 GmbH – Agency for Participation and Collaboration*.

During the first weekend, the focus was on training the participants and interviewing the experts. At the beginning of the weekend, the participants of the citizen panel got to know each other in a playful way and developed common working principles. This created a constructive atmosphere in which all Citizen Panel members felt welcome and where dissenting opinions were valued and respected. On the first day, the participants also received an introduction to the principles of deliberation and an overview of the program for the following four days. Afterwards, City Councilor Karin Fehr and the Head of Waste Management and Environment, Sarina Laustela, introduced the members of the citizens' panel to the topic and explained what measures the city of Uster is taking in the area of climate protection.

already implemented. They also integrated the question from the Uster citizens' panel into the existing climate protection activities and explained how the recommendations of the citizens' panel would be integrated into the city's activities.

In the afternoon of the first day, Heinz Haag, President of the *Uster trade association*, and Sarah William and Flurin Tippmann from the *climate strike in Uster* were given the opportunity to present their concerns and views on the subject of climate protection in Uster to the citizens' panel. The members of the citizen panel were able to ask questions to the representatives of both interest groups in order to gain a better insight into their positions.

The second day was dedicated to the expert surveys. A total of seven experts from areas such as waste management, climate protection and invited to regional food production. For the selection of the experts, the project team from the Center for Democracy Aarau, in consultation with Dr. Céline Colombo, project manager of the "Participation" program of the canton of Zurich, and Sarina Laustela from the city of Uster.<sup>9</sup> The expert survey was divided into two rounds of talks, each with 3-4 experts. In each round of talks, the members of the citizen panel were given the opportunity to exchange ideas with all the experts and to ask them questions. The second day was rounded off by an exchange in the plenum about the newly gained knowledge.

The second weekend was about first developing recommendations and then adopting them. On the third day, the members of the Uster citizen panel first dealt with the question of why Uster should campaign for more climate protection. From this, action-guiding principles were derived, which were taken up in the final report of the citizen panel. The members of the citizen panel then agreed on four fields of action, in which specific recommendations were developed. These are the fields of action of *information transfer*, *waste & consumption*, *urban planning* and *mobility*. In order to develop the individual recommendations in a more intensive exchange, the members of the citizens' panel divided themselves into these four fields of action. In changing group constellations and interactive rounds of talks, suggestions were developed, discussed, differentiated and, in some cases, discarded again. At the end of the third day, the groups presented the current status of the recommendations to each other.

On the fourth and last day, the citizens' panel formulated its recommendations and approved them in a joint vote. In the morning, the citizen panel worked again in alternating small groups. After the lunch break, all members of the citizen panel met in plenary to discuss and vote on the individual recommendations. In the run-up to the vote, the members of the citizen panel decided, on the recommendation of the organization team, that the voting results would be included in the final report. For each recommendation, it was therefore indicated how much agreement it had received within the citizen panel: a total of 44

Recommendations included in the final report, 32 of them unopposed, 6 of them with

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<sup>9</sup> The full list of experts can be found in Appendix 2.

strong majority (more than 13 votes) and 6 simple majority (more than 10 votes).

3 recommendations did not achieve a majority in the final vote and were therefore not included in the final report.

Four members of the citizen panel made themselves available to correct the language of the final report and to standardize it. They edited the final report one last time. The other members of the citizen panel had the opportunity to proofread the edited version. Thus, the entire content of the final report was written exclusively by the members of the citizen panel. An external graphic artist was hired for the visual processing; the content of the report has not been changed. On October 11, 2021, the city of Uster sent the results report to a total of 18,053 households in order to make the population of Uster aware of the citizens' panel and its recommendations for more climate protection.

### 3.4 Presentation of the results at a citizens' café

With the dispatch of the result report to the Ustermer households, the city of Uster invited the population to a citizens' café. The Bürgercafé took place on November 4, 2021 in the evening in the Stadthofsaal Uster. A total of 112 people from Uster were present. At this public event, the members of the citizen panel presented their results to an interested public. City councilor Karin Fehr, for her part, commented on the results of the citizens' panel and explained the city's further procedure with regard to the implementation of the individual recommendations. The interested public was then able to contribute to the discussion. Using the World Café methodology, those present exchanged views on different questions in three rounds of talks and recorded their answers in writing. The answers to the individual questions are briefly summarized below.

#### 1a) "What do I like about the citizen panel/citizen letter?"

The reactions to the citizen panel were mostly positive. The people present welcomed this new form of political participation. They also welcomed the selection and composition of the citizens' panel and appreciated that voices from the population were given the opportunity to obtain well-founded information and to develop proposals. In addition, most of those present were of the opinion that the citizens' panel was able to set new political impulses and promote the participation of the population. Some stated that the implementation of the citizen panel shows that the municipality of Uster is active and takes the voices of the population seriously. Most of the participants in the citizens' café stated that they recognized themselves in the content and topics. They considered the topics to be well chosen and welcomed the fact that hot political issues were addressed and that a "colorful bouquet" of recommendations and solutions was developed.

**1b) "What do I dislike about the citizen panel/citizen letter?"**

There were also isolated critical voices about the citizens' panel. In terms of content, some of those present stated that the citizens' letter was too extensive and vague. They would have welcomed it if the citizens' panel had developed fewer recommendations and instead dealt with individual recommendations in more depth. Others noted that many of the recommendations were addressed to city authorities and very few directly to the population. In addition, some stated that they found out about the process too late and that information on the citizens' panel was difficult to find on the city's website. The greatest point of criticism, however, related to the implementation of the recommendations developed and their lack of binding force. It was not clear to many of those present what would happen to the recommendations, whether and in what form which recommendations would be implemented.

**2) "If I were city councilor of Uster, which results would I implement as a priority?"**

The evaluation of the recommendations to be implemented as a priority showed that three subject areas in particular met with great approval: traffic, waste prevention and information transfer. Transport recommendations were by far the most cited, including recommendations such as traffic calming/tempo 30, car-free zones in the city center and safe cycle lanes. On the topic of waste, the recommendations for the introduction of reusable tableware and the establishment of a repair café and a platform for rental tools met with interest. The introduction of a household bag for collecting plastic waste was also often mentioned. With regard to the provision of information, those present prioritized three recommendations: First, the introduction of a city-owned app that the authorities could use to communicate with the population. Second, the promotion of climate and sustainability issues in schools, e.g. through visits by environmental experts. Thirdly, holding regular events to strengthen the sense of community, to visualize climate facts and waste problems, to shake up the population or to strengthen the people's personal responsibility.

**3) "Where can I start myself?"**

The participants in the citizens' café also developed a large number of measures for more climate protection, which they can implement themselves in their everyday lives. This included adapting one's own mobility behavior, for example using public transport more often than the car. Or measures to avoid waste, such as the stronger 10. Many also mentioned waste application of the 6 Rs of waste avoidance. separation or the those present to question their own consumer behavior. With regard to nutrition, for example, they stated that they wanted to pay more attention to regional and seasonal products. In addition, the continuation of the talks on the subject of climate protection with acquaintances,

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<sup>10</sup> The 6 Rs consist of Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle and Red (cf. Wälti & Almeida (2016): Ent-Sorgen? Waste in Switzerland illustrated. Federal Office for the Environment, Bern. Environmental status no. 1615: 46 p.).

To be another lever for friends and families that the participants of the citizens' café could and wanted to use themselves.

### **3.5 Political affiliation**

The service group "Waste Management and Environment" of the city administration of Uster took up the recommendations of the citizen panel with curiosity and interest. She examines the individual recommendations and determines the responsibilities for them within the city administration respective recommendations. The recommendations of the citizen panel are then discussed in the city council and their implementation is decided. In spring/summer 2022, the city of Uster will communicate in writing which recommendations can be implemented in which time frame and justify which recommendations cannot be pursued further.

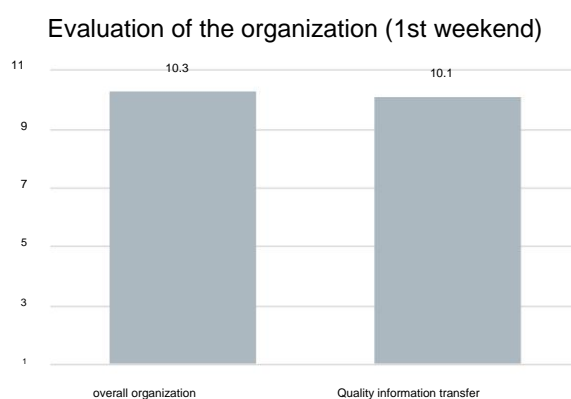
## 4. Evaluation by the participants

In order to be able to record the satisfaction of the participants, the members of the Uster citizen panel filled out a questionnaire at the end of each weekend. The quality and neutrality of the organization and the moderation of the process, the quality of the information transfer, the assessment of the discussion culture and an overall assessment of the process were at the center of the investigation interest. For each question, the answer options between 1 ("do not agree at all", "never", "not important") and 11 ("agree completely", "almost always", "very important") were assigned, with one additional option "don't know". In general, higher values indicate good quality of the process.

The following figures each indicate the average value from all the answers given by the participants.

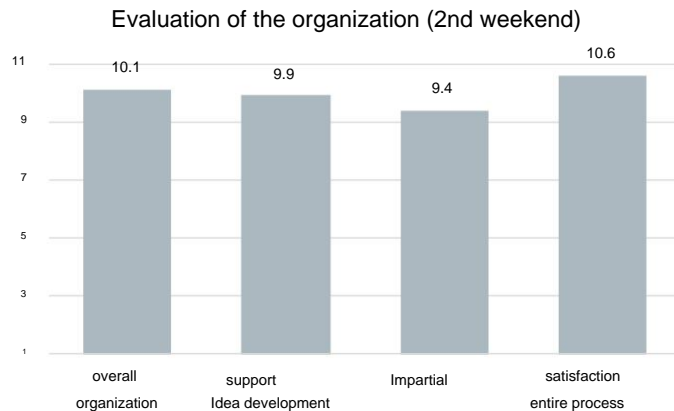
### 4.1 Organization

Overall, the participants in the Uster citizen panel were satisfied with the process. They assessed the overall organization of the citizen panel as *very good* and attested the organizational team a high degree of impartiality. They also rated the quality of the information provided and the support made available to them as *high*. In several comments, the participants stated that they were very satisfied with the process and the moderation, appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Uster Citizens' Panel and also enjoyed the catering during the four days.



**Figure 6: Evaluation of the organization of the 1st weekend.** Mean values for the questions "To what extent did the organization team succeed in providing you with the necessary support for your participation in relation to 1) the general organization, 2) the quality of knowledge transfer?" Answer options between 1 = extremely poorly managed to 11 = perfectly managed; n=19.



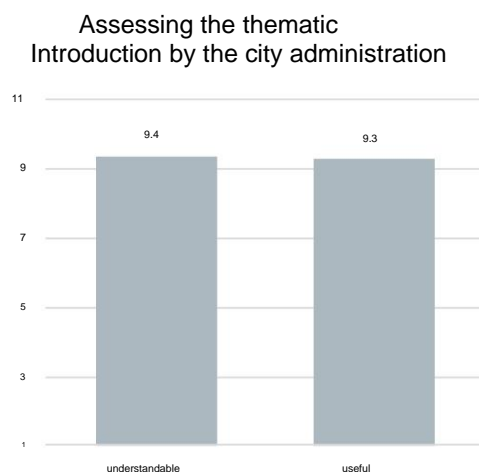


**Figure 7: Evaluation of the organization of the 2nd weekend.** Mean values for the questions "To what extent did the organization team succeed in providing you with the necessary support for your participation in relation to 1) the general organization, 2) the development of ideas and measures?" Answer options between 1 = extremely poorly managed to 11 = perfectly succeeded. Answer options for the other two questions between 1 = very dissatisfied to 11 = very satisfied: "One of the goals of the citizen panel was that the organizing team remains impartial, to enable the subject to be examined as objectively as possible. How satisfied are you with it?" and "Looking back on the four days of the citizen panel, how satisfied are you with the whole process?" n = 18.

## 4.2 Information transfer

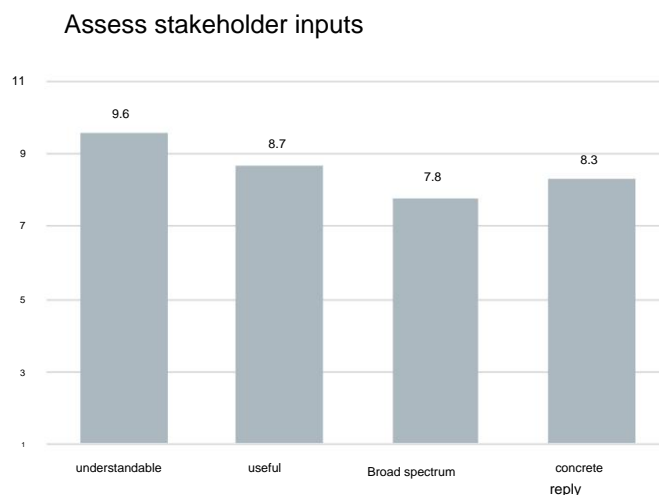
The transfer of information is central to every deliberative process. It ensures that the context of the citizens' panel is defined and that the members of the citizens' panel can fall back on a common knowledge base. The transfer of information forms the basis for the subsequent deliberation. It must ensure that the members of the citizen panel receive all the important information and perspectives that are relevant to answering the question. The provision of information in the Uster citizen panel was divided into three stages: a thematic introduction by representatives of the city of Uster, the survey of local interest groups and the survey of external specialists.

The members of the citizen panel appreciated the introduction of the city representatives Uster and judged them to be understandable and useful for their further work.



**Figure 8: Mean values for the statements "The introduction was useful" and "The introduction was understandable".** Answer options from 1 = completely disagree to 11 = completely agree; n=19.

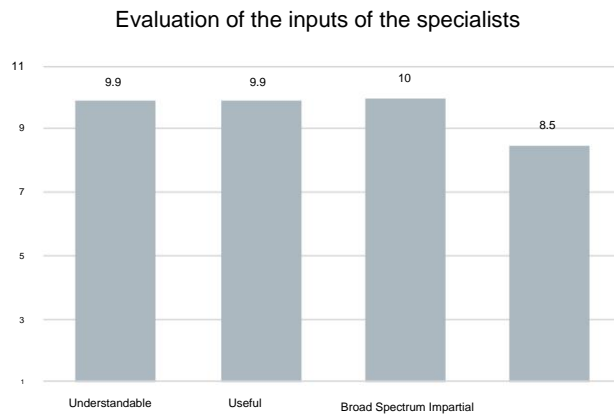
The members of the citizen panel also found the perspectives of the Ustermer trade association and the Uster climate strike to be understandable and useful, with the average value being slightly lower than the thematic introduction by the city representatives. The interest groups were also able to give helpful and concrete answers as to what they believe the city of Uster can do to improve climate protection. However, the average score of 7.8 on the spectrum scale suggests that a broader selection or additional voices from other advocacy organizations had further increased the quality of information transfer.



**Figure 9: Mean values for the statements "The hearing was understandable", "The hearing was useful", "The hearing covered a wide range of topics and perspectives" and "The hearing provided concrete answers".**

Answer options from 1 = completely disagree to 11 = completely agree. The answers were collected individually for the hearing of the trade association and the hearing of the climate strike. The average values of the respective statements were added together for the illustrations; n=38.

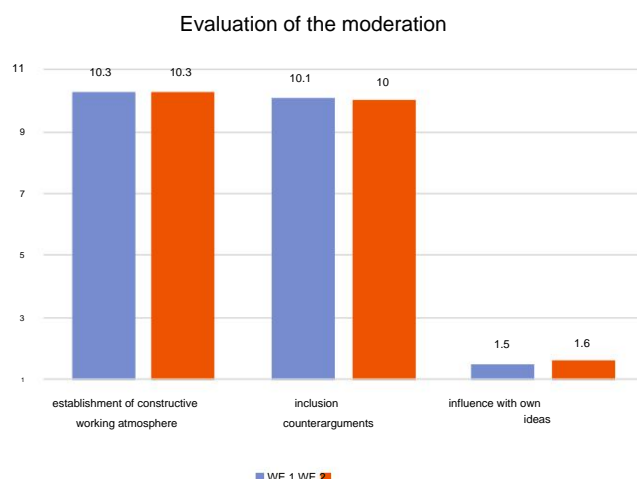
Compared to the interest groups, the members of the citizen panel stated that the selection of the seven external experts covered a wide range of topics and perspectives. They also rated the comprehensibility and usefulness of the expert panels as very high. With regard to impartiality, some members of the citizen panel indicated that individual professionals acted too much as stakeholders and less as providers of independent and factual information. This is reflected in the evaluation of the experts' impartiality, which has the lowest average value of 8.5.



**Figure 10:** Mean values for the statements "The panel was understandable", "The panel was useful", "The panel covered a wide range of topics and perspectives" and "The hearing was impartial". Answer options from 1 = completely disagree to 11 = completely agree. The answers were collected individually for the two expert panels. The average values of the respective rounds were added together for the illustrations; n=38.

### 4.3 Moderation

The moderation has an extremely important and demanding task within a citizen panel. Based on the principles of a deliberative understanding of democracy, one of the tasks of the moderator is to enable an inclusive discussion in which all participants have the opportunity to be heard. Participants should also be able to justify their opinions, listen to each other and respect other opinions. In order to make this possible, a constructive working atmosphere must first be established. In addition, the core task of the moderator is to guide through the process of the citizen panel without bringing your own ideas into the discussion. As Figure 11 below shows, the moderation of the Uster citizen panel fulfilled this task on both weekends to the complete satisfaction of the participants.

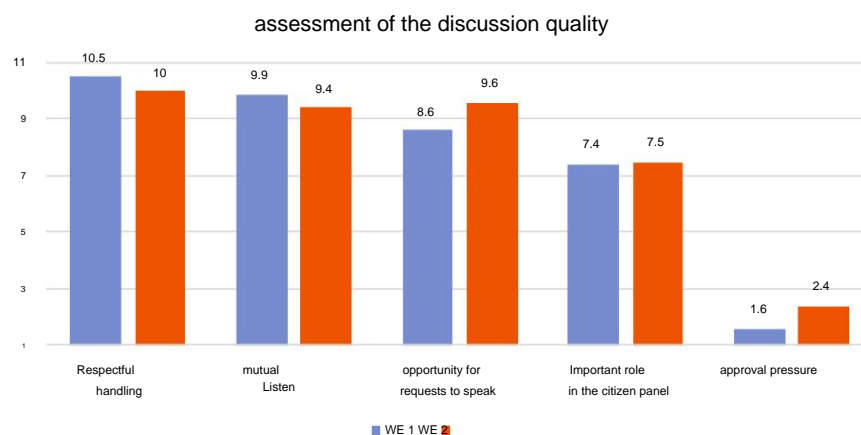


**Figure 11:** Mean values for the statements "the moderators managed to establish a constructive atmosphere within the citizen panel", "the moderators made sure that opposing arguments were also taken into account" and "the moderators sometimes trying to influence the group with their own ideas". Answer options from 1 = completely disagree to 11 = completely agree; nWE1 = 19, nWE2 = 18.

## 4.4 Discussion Quality

The participants also rated the quality of the discussion within the citizen panel as very high. In particular, they appreciated the respectful interaction with one another. They also stated that they actively listened to each other's opinions when others expressed them. According to the participants, there was ample opportunity to express their own opinion. Especially on the second weekend, when it came to developing recommendations, this average value of 9.6 was very high. Furthermore, the participants did not feel they had to agree even though they were not sure.

With 2.4, the pressure for approval was also low on the second weekend when it came to passing the recommendations. From this it can be concluded that there was a great deal of openness and tolerance within the citizen panel to contribute one's own opinion.



**Figure 12:** Mean values for the questions "During the discussions over the weekend, did you have the feeling that the other participants\* treated you with respect?", "During the discussions over the weekend, did you listen carefully when other participants\*\* What opinions did you express?", "During this weekend's discussions, did you have ample opportunity to speak up if you felt it necessary?", "In your personal estimation, did you play an important role in the citizens' panel discussions this weekend ?" (Answer options between 1 = not at all important, 11 = extremely important) and "During the discussions over the weekend, did you feel pressured to agree to something that you were not sure about?" (Answer options between 1 = never until 11 = almost always); nWE1 = 19, nWE2 = 18.

The personal assessment of whether you played an important role within the citizen panel was somewhat lower than the other values. This is also shown in Figure 13 below, which provides information on how much the participants participated in the discussions compared to the other participants. On the first weekend, six people stated that they contributed to the discussion less often than others and four people just as much as others. The second weekend when it comes to the development and adoption of ideas and recommendations

went, participation in the discussion proved to be more balanced.

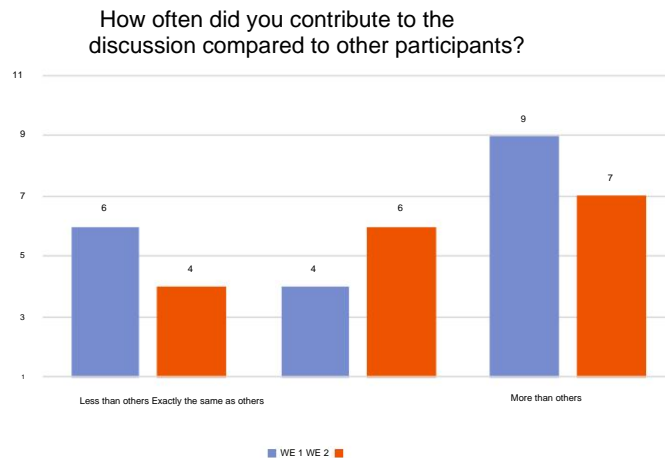


Figure 13: Respondents' assessment of their own participation in the discussion; nWE1 = 19, nWE2 = 18.

Nonetheless, a slim majority (rather) agreed that some Participants tended to dominate the discussion.

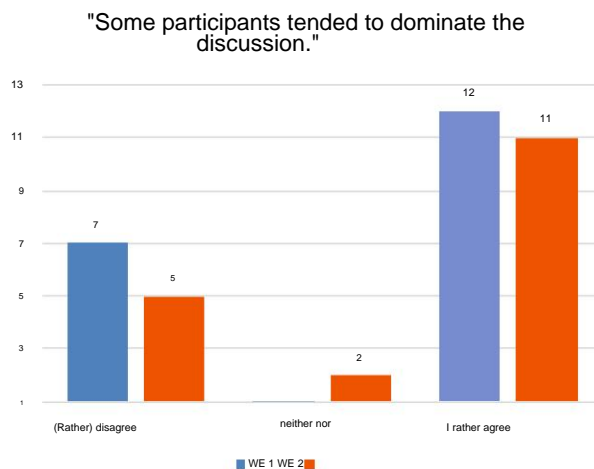


Figure 14: Respondents' assessment of the discussion dominance of some participants; nWE1 = 19, nWE2 = 18.

During the second weekend in particular, when it came to the adoption of the recommendations, some of the participants were a little resentful. In appropriate They commented that the rules of discussion established at the beginning of the process, which ensured a constructive and equal working atmosphere, were not sufficiently respected when the recommendations were adopted on the fourth day. In particular, a few would have tried to dominate the discussions without relevant arguments, thereby drowning out less loud voices.

#### 4.5 Satisfaction with Results – Citizens' Letter

With regard to satisfaction with the result, ie the citizens' letter, an interesting picture emerges. The vast majority stated that they were fairly or very satisfied with the result. Only one person stated that they were rather dissatisfied with the result, on the grounds that it was all just theory. Satisfaction with the citizen's letter

The participants justify that the result is a joint effort and contains a broad catalog of recommendations. However, quite a few also stated that they needed more time to discuss individual recommendations in more detail and to standardize the wording of the individual recommendations. Some participants believed that the quality of the recommendations would have been even higher if they had had more time for discussion and cleanup. In particular, several participants would have liked more time for discussions in the plenum to negotiate individual recommendations together. In relation to the time in small groups, in which the recommendations were initially developed, the time for joint discussion in the plenum was a bit too short. One person would also have appreciated if the introduction had explained the circumstances (time constraints) under which the recommendations were made, in order to increase the understanding of the recommendations among those who did not follow the process. Overall, the participants were satisfied with the result of the four-day work and rated the citizens' letter with an average value of 8.4. The result and process satisfaction are also strongly related ( $r=.79$ ), which underlines that the careful process design from the perspective of the participants was accompanied by a positive evaluation of the results.

With regard to the question of whether participation in the Uster citizen panel triggered something in the participants and changed them personally, 15 out of 18 people answered in the affirmative. The following justifications by the participants are examples of the change they experienced through their participation in the Uster citizen panel:

*«I am grateful for the opportunity to exchange views on the topic with a large group of experts and fellow citizens. And this especially with representatives of groups that I have been biased towards so far. (...) It confirmed to me how important it is to overcome prejudices and to listen to a group of people outside of one's own world of opinion.»*

*«I came in the first day with extremely less knowledge than I did on the last day ran out. Knowing the facts better changed my opinions on some points.»*

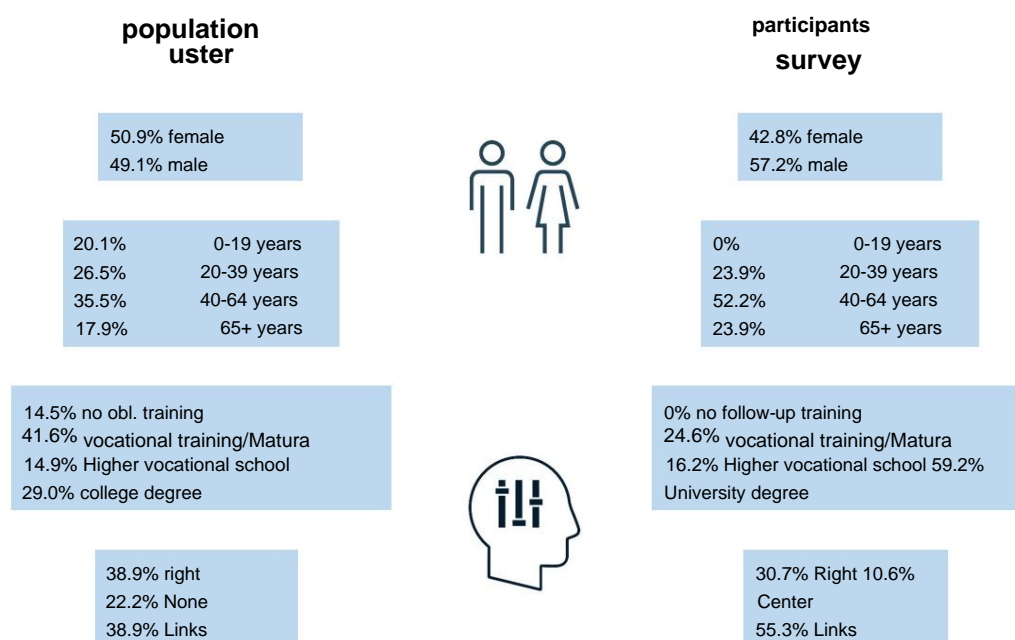
*«In the last 40 years, I have never experienced any other political occasion where such different people made a committed effort to reach a consensus. And young people (particularly women!) who put their heart and soul into it.»*

Those participants who stated that they had not changed mainly attributed this to the fact that they are already very sensitive to the topic of climate protection and are used to hearing other opinions and taking them into account when forming their own opinions.

## 5. Evaluation of the population survey

Using a population survey, we examined how the Uster citizens' panel and its results were received by the general public. The invitation to this online survey was enclosed with the mailing of the results of the citizen panel to all households. Unfortunately, the response was very poor at 1.1 percent, which is why the results presented here cannot be generalized. Below we provide an overview of the response to the population survey. We then present the results of the survey in four sections: attitudes towards climate protection, knowledge and willingness to participate in the Uster citizen panel, assessment of the Uster citizen panel and attitudes towards future citizen panels.

A total of 201 people took part in the survey. A total of 192 observations that completed 30 percent or more of the questionnaire were considered for the analysis. As the figures in Figure 15 show<sup>11</sup>, the survey is not representative. Compared to the population of Uster, men are overrepresented with 57.2% of the respondents, women are underrepresented with 42.8%. Furthermore, older people and in particular overrepresented the 40-64 age category in the survey. In addition, people with a university degree and those who associate themselves with the left-wing political spectrum are over-represented. This must be taken into account when interpreting the results.



**Figure 15: Distribution of the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants compared to the total population.**

<sup>11</sup> The figures for the distribution of gender and age of the Ustermer population come from the municipality portrait of the canton of Zurich (<https://www.zh.ch/de/politik-staat/gemeinden/gemeindeportraet.html>). The distribution of educational qualifications comes from the structure survey of the Federal Statistical Office (2021) and represents the distribution of the highest completed education of the permanent resident population of the canton of Zurich. The distribution of political attitudes is based on the distribution of seats of the parties in the Ustermer municipal council (as of 2018; right = SVP, FDP, EDU; center = GLP, EVP, CVP, BDP, BPU; left = SP, Greens).

## 5.1 Attitudes towards climate protection

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked about their attitude towards climate protection. The topic of climate protection is very important to those surveyed, both in relation to Switzerland and in relation to themselves. Over 90% of those surveyed believe that the topic of climate protection is rather important or very important.

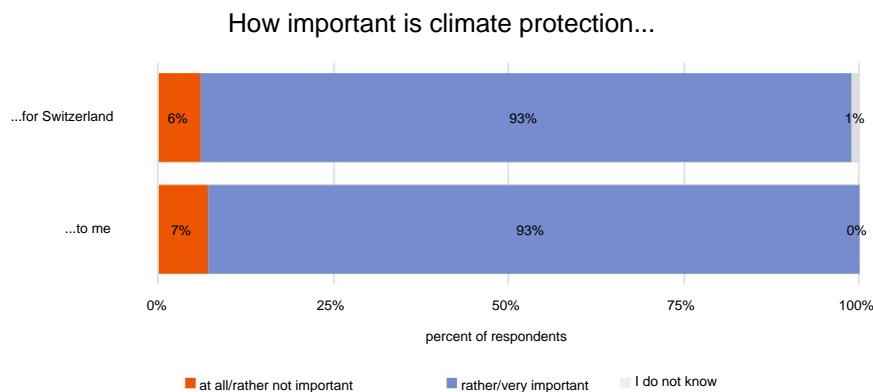


Figure 16: Respondents' attitudes towards climate protection; n=192.

In addition, the majority of those surveyed agree that the City Council, the Government Council and the Federal Council are not doing enough in the area of climate protection. The city council gets the best rating. In the eyes of those surveyed, the Federal Council is most likely to have an obligation to do more in the area of climate protection. From the point of view of the respondents, climate protection seems to be a task for the federal government first, then the canton and only then the city to be usher.

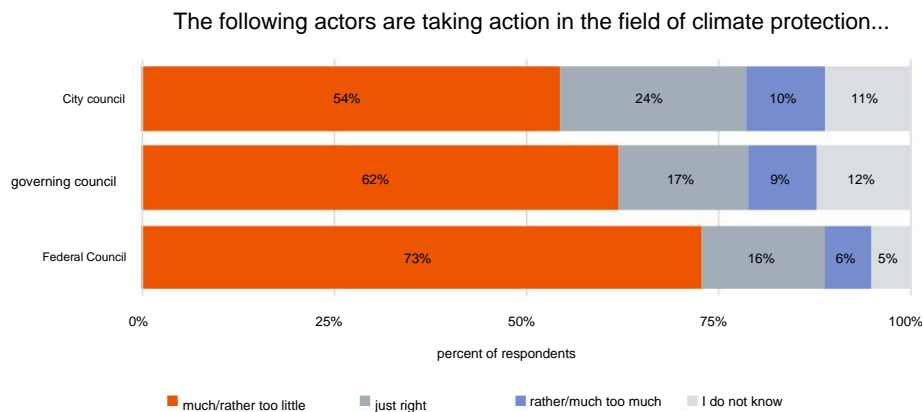


Figure 17: Assessment of the activities undertaken in the area of climate protection; n=192.

## 5.2 Knowledge of the citizen panel and willingness to participate

We then asked respondents if they had heard of the citizen panel's report before they received it. 43.2 percent of respondents answered yes to this question. The main sources through which they had learned from the Uster citizen panel were the communication of the city of Uster and media reporting (almost a third of the respondents each). However, 16.9 percent stated that they were among the 2,000 originally



randomly invited to participate. 12 percent were informed by acquaintances, friends or family. Only 2.4 percent stated that they became aware of the Uster citizen panel through social media.

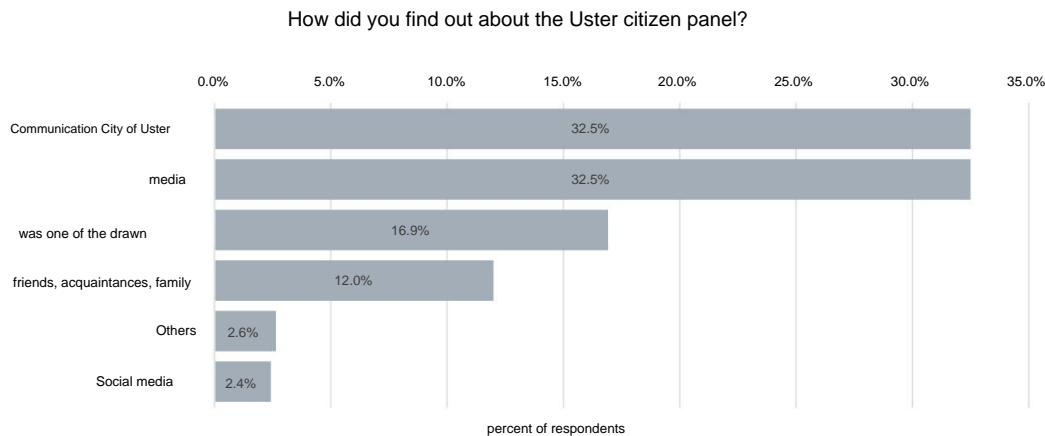


Figure 18: Information on sources of information that the respondents had found out about from the Uster citizen panel; n=83.

With regard to the willingness to participate in a citizen panel, it can be stated that this is very high among the respondents. A total of 78 percent of those surveyed stated that they would rather or definitely take part in a citizen panel if they were drawn by lot. Only 18 percent would rather or definitely not take part in a citizen panel. Interestingly, there is no statistically significant connection between respondents' political views and willingness to participate in the survey. This means that the willingness to take part in a citizen panel does not depend on whether the respondents classify themselves as politically left-wing or politically right-wing.

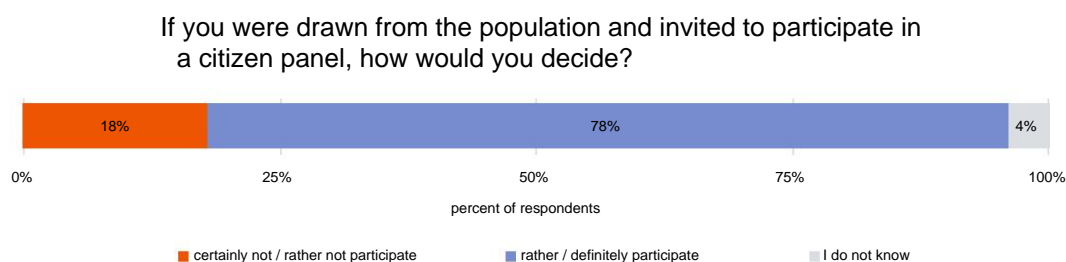
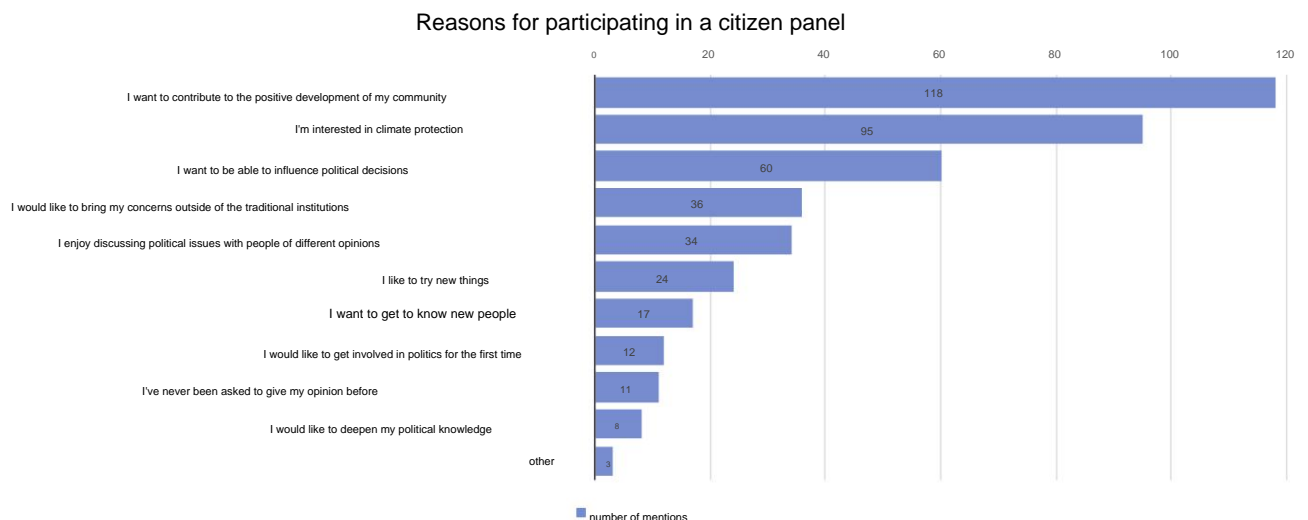


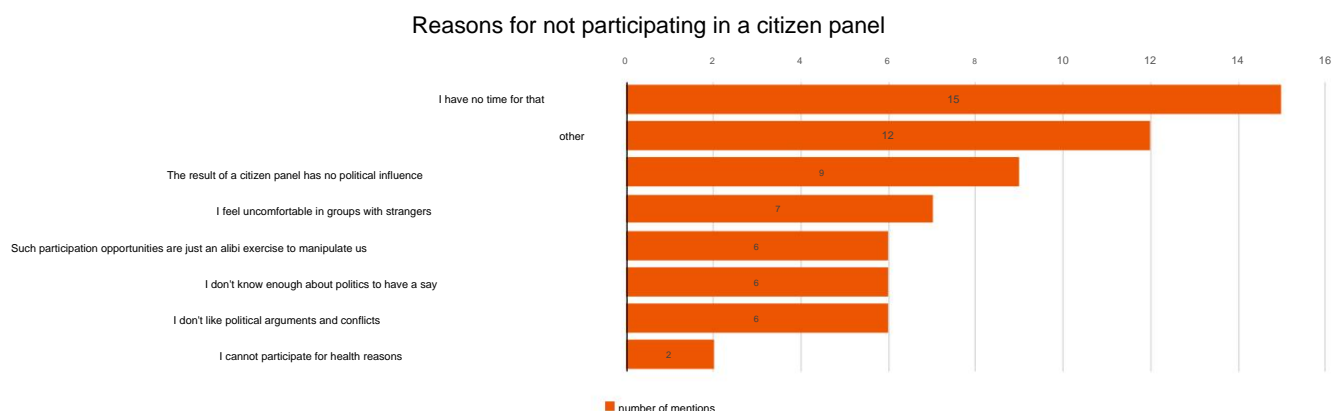
Figure 19: Respondents' willingness to participate in a citizens' panel; n=192.

The reasons for participating in a citizen panel are diverse. Respondents could select up to three reasons. By far the most frequently mentioned motive is to contribute to the positive development of the community. Interest in the topic of climate protection and the intention of being able to influence political decisions were two reasons that were often mentioned for participating in a citizen panel.



**Figure 20: Reasons given for participation in a citizen panel; n= 418.**

Those respondents who did not want to participate in a citizen panel cited lack of time as the biggest obstacle to participation. The lack of political influence of the citizen panels was also frequently given as a reason for not participating.



**Figure 21: Reasons given for not participating in a citizen panel; n=63.**

### 5.3 Assessment of the Citizen Panel of Uster

The legitimacy of a citizens' panel composed of the population by drawing lots depends not least on the acceptance of those who did not take part in the citizens' panel. For this reason, it is important to ask about the attitudes of the general public towards the Citizen Panel. Figure 22 shows trust in various political institutions. As can be seen, trust in science, federal authorities and the judiciary/courts is highest among those surveyed. 66 percent of those questioned expressed a high level of trust in the citizens' panel. The trust of the respondents in the citizen panel is practically identical to the trust in the cantonal and communal authorities. Trust in the media and political parties is lowest among respondents.

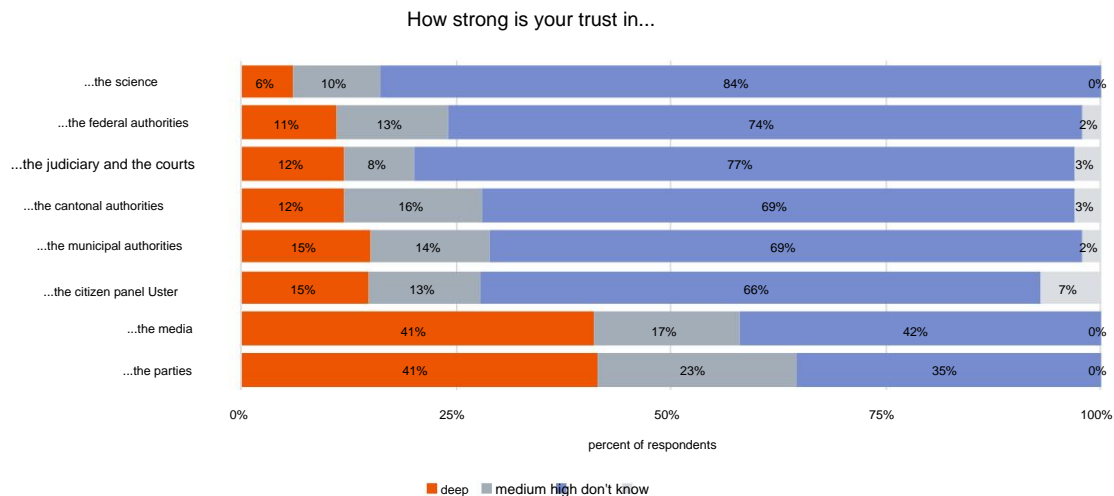


Figure 22: Respondents' trust in political institutions; n=166.

We also wanted to know from respondents who they trust more to take appropriate action to mitigate climate change. As it turned out, more than twice as many respondents trusted the Uster Citizens Panel more than Uster politicians to take suitable climate protection measures. Twenty-two percent trusted both equally, and 13 percent were unsure which to trust more. It can thus be stated that the respondents have a high level of trust in the Citizens' Panel of Uster and that they regard it as suitable for developing climate protection measures.

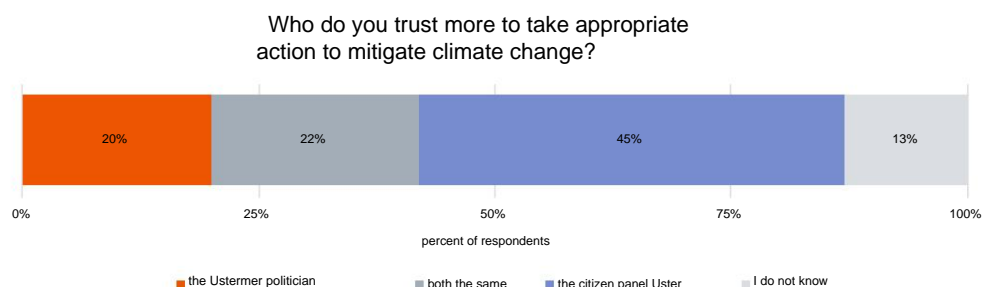
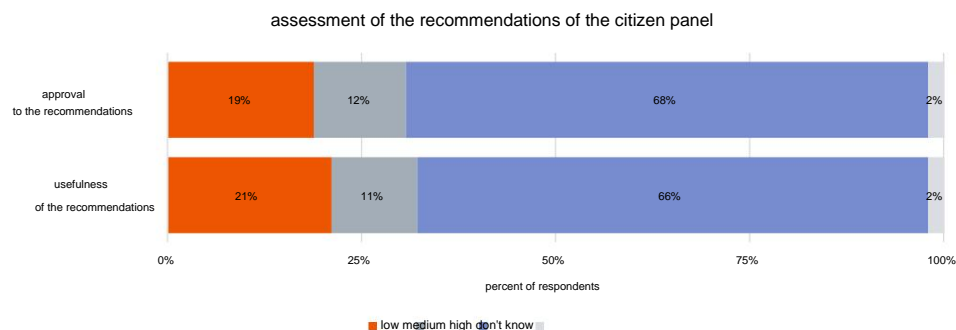


Figure 23: Trust in politicians and citizen panels to take suitable climate protection measures; n=190.

A positive picture also emerges with regard to the assessment of the recommendations of the Uster citizen panel. 68 percent of those questioned indicated that they *agreed strongly* with the recommendations that had been drawn up. Almost 20 percent of those surveyed rate their approval of the recommendations as low. The situation is similar when it comes to the *usefulness* of the recommendations: around two-thirds of those surveyed consider the recommendations useful, and just over 20 percent judge the recommendations to be of little use. With regard to agreement with the results and the assessment of their usefulness, there is a statistically significant connection with political attitudes. This means that the further to the right one of the people surveyed places themselves, the lower their agreement with the recommendations and the assessment of their usefulness.

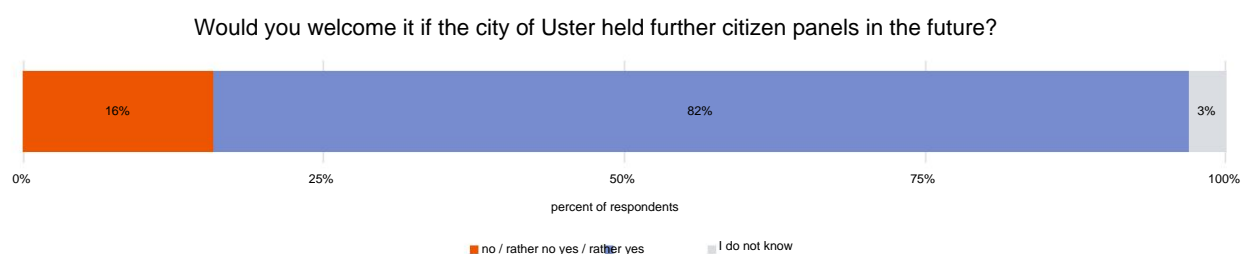


**Figure 24: Respondents' assessment of their agreement with the recommendations of the citizens' panel and their usefulness; n=185.**

The respondents were also invited to formulate their attitudes towards the citizen panel in a comment column. The majority of comments stated that those questioned perceive the Citizens' Panel Uster as "a good thing" and think that it promotes the participation of the population. With regard to the recommendations, some of the respondents were of the opinion that the citizens' panel had generated good ideas and that "something is happening in Uster". There were also various critical comments that the citizens' panel described as "nonsensical" or even "undemocratic". The small number of members of the citizen panel was also criticized in isolated cases. With regard to the results, it has sometimes been criticized that the results are too non-binding, do not go far enough or do not contain any new insights. As a suggestion, some respondents indicated that the recommendations should also be prioritized and checked with regard to feasibility.

## 5.4 Future citizen panels

Finally, the respondents were able to state how they felt about further implementation of citizen panels in Uster. More than 80 percent of those questioned stated that they would welcome or would rather welcome it if the city of Uster held further citizen panels in the future. Only 16 percent rejected further implementations completely or rather.



**Figure 25: Approval/refusal to conduct further citizen panels: n = 185.**

However, here too there is a statistically significant connection with the political attitude of the respondents: the more to the left the respondents assessed themselves politically, the more likely they were to agree to further citizen panels. In view of that

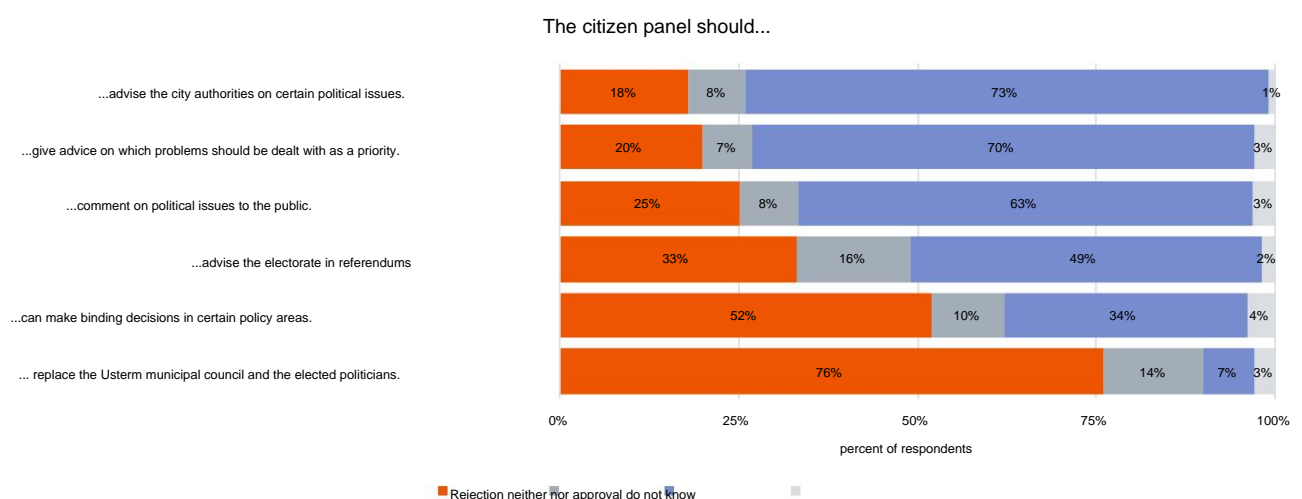
politically left-oriented people were slightly overrepresented in this survey, approval of other citizen panels in the general population is likely to be less high.

The respondents also had the opportunity to contribute ideas for future citizen panels.

We were able to allocate these ideas to one of three main categories: *urban planning*, *climate/environmental protection* or *social issues*: most of the ideas submitted<sup>12</sup> for future citizen panels can be assigned to urban planning. The issue of mobility/traffic management was mentioned the most by far, followed by the design of Uster's city center and the issue of waste, recycling and littering. Many of those surveyed would also like to see another citizen panel on the subject of climate protection.

Topics such as the adaptation of individual behavior, renewable energies as well as nature conservation and biodiversity were explicitly mentioned. As a third category, we identified various social topics for which the respondents would like a citizen panel: coexistence & behavior, migration & integration, cultural offers, health, or political rights & participation as well as leisure time and sport.

With regard to future possible uses of citizen panels, an interesting picture emerged. Respondents saw the role of citizen panels as primarily advising city authorities on specific policy issues or giving advice on which issues should be prioritized. A majority of respondents could also imagine that a citizen panel would make public statements on political issues. When it came to advising the electorate on referendums, opinions were divided. On the other hand, the fact that a citizens' panel can make binding decisions or even replace the municipal council with elected politicians was rejected by the majority of those surveyed. It can thus be stated that the respondents see the role of citizen panels primarily in an advisory capacity for the city authorities and less as a decision-making body.



**Figure 26: Respondents' approval/rejection of various possible uses of citizen panels; n=182.**

<sup>12</sup> The topics listed are those that were mentioned five or more times.

## 6. Summary and Evaluation

This interim report explains the context, content and process of the Uster citizen panel and explains how the participants were drawn at random. In addition, we present how the participants of the citizen panel and the respondents of the population survey assess the process.

Based on the assessment of the members of the citizens' panel, we can say that the vast majority of participants were very satisfied with the organization and the process and that taking part in the citizens' panel of Uster was an enriching experience. A majority appreciated the whole process and especially the opportunity to learn about a topic together and to exchange ideas with different people with different opinions. The participants attested to the high quality of the information provided and regarded it as a good basis for further work. However, some participants stated that the information density was very high. A lot of information was conveyed on various topics from different perspectives. Despite the high quality of the information provided, it is important for future implementations to ensure that the information provided is adapted to the capacity of the participants and that the relevant information is presented in an appealing way.

It was also a unique experience for many to develop and decide on joint recommendations with such a diverse group in a consensus-oriented process. The constructive and respectful working atmosphere throughout the process was also greatly appreciated. Overall, the quality of the discussion was high, with a high degree of mutual respect and openness to the opinions of the participants. This is also thanks to the high quality of the moderation. Only when the recommendations were passed did a certain unrest spread among the participants. For future public participation procedures in this format, it is important to ensure that the previously established working atmosphere is retained in the last part of the process and that equal participation in the discussion is made possible.

Despite the short time available for developing, discussing and approving the recommendations, the vast majority of participants were extremely satisfied with their outcome. They value the quality and breadth of recommendations. Based on these findings, from the perspective of the participants, a consistently positive conclusion can be drawn from the implementation of the Uster citizen panel.

With regard to the population survey, it can be said that the majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards the citizen panel as a deliberative participatory process. First, trust in the citizen panel is high due to its composition. Second, two-thirds of those surveyed judge the recommendations

of the citizen panel as useful and agree with the recommendations made. Third, it shows that a large majority would be willing to take part in a citizen panel if drawn by lot, regardless of political affiliation. The main reasons for participation are interest in the topic and the will to contribute to the positive development of the community. The biggest obstacle to participation is the time available. Last but not least, more than 80 percent of those surveyed are in favor of holding further citizen panels in the future. Due to the socio-demographic composition of the respondents, however, the available findings cannot be easily generalized. Although it provides interesting insights and findings, it requires further investigation in order to be able to make representative statements.

From the authors' point of view, the Uster citizens' panel was a success for several reasons. Firstly, the random selection of the participants made it possible to integrate people into the political process who are otherwise not or only very little politically active. The citizens' café also mobilized people who the city is less able to reach through its conventional participation processes and communication channels. Secondly, the citizens' panel made it possible for Uster to involve the population in the discussion about measures to improve climate protection. The participants jointly developed a variety of broadly based recommendations on how the city can achieve its climate goals. Thirdly, there was a high level of approval and acceptance of this deliberative form of citizen participation among the members of the Uster citizen panel, the participants in the citizen café and the majority of those questioned in the Uster population survey. Citizen panels are seen as a valuable form of participation that brings people with different perspectives together in an informed and respectful exchange to find common solutions to work out.

However, a final assessment by the Uster Citizens' Panel can only be made when it is clear which recommendations from the Uster Citizens' Panel will be taken up and implemented by the City of Uster. A final report will be published for this purpose in due course.

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Odds for Stratified Lottery

Selection criteria	distribution in population	Positive reply (N=129)	Quota Citizen Panel Uster (N=20)
<b>gender</b>			
women	50.9%	42.6%	50-55%
Men	49.1%	57.4%	(n = 10-11) 45-55% (n = 9-10)
<b>age</b>			
0-19	20.1		10-20%
16-19		4.7	(n= 2-4)
20-39	26.5%	48.9%	20-35%
40-64	35.5%	48.9%	(n= 5-6) 35-40%
65+	17.9%	12.4%	(n= 7-8) 15-20% (n= 3-4)
<b>training</b>			
No post-mandatory training	14.5%	5.4%	10-15%
vocational training	41.6%	14.7%	(n=2-3) 20-25%
Matura exam		10.1%	(n= 4-5) 10-15%
higher vocational education	14.9%	19.4%	(n = 2-3) 10-15%
BA/MA	29.0%	41.1%	(n = 2-3) 25-30%
Doctorate		9.3%	(n = 5-6) 0-5% (n = 0-1)
<b>Political attitude</b>			
To the right	38.9%	14.7%	35-40%
Not	22.2%	20.2%	(n = 7-8) 20-25%
Links	38.9%	57.4%	(n = 4-5) 35-40%
I do not know		7.8%	(n = 7-8) 0-5% (n= 0-1)
<b>voting behavior</b>			
always	23.3%	51.9%	25-35%
Often	20.9%	27.1%	(n= 5-7) 20-30%
one out of two	14.0%	4.7%	(n = 4-6) 5-10%
Rarely	17.1%	8.5%	(n = 1-2) 10-15%
Not	24.8%	7.8%	(n= 2-3) 10-15% (n = 2-3)



## 7.2 Expertenliste

Expert round 1	
Name	function
Dr. Sabin Bieri	Director of the Center for Development and Environment of the University of Bern
Lukas Rühli	Senior Fellow and Research Leader Smart Government bei Avenir Suisse
Otto Schmid	Senior Researcher and Agricultural Economist at Research Institute for Organic Farming
Brigitte Fischer	Scientist and expert in Waste management at GeoBalance GmbH
Expert round 2	
Name	function
Tamara Wüthrich	Project Manager Circular Economy at Sanu Durabilitas
To Sander	Dr.-Ing. national culture and environmental protection
Nora Wilhelm	Co-founder and catalyst of Collaboratio Helvetica