Second
Engagement Report 2016

Demographic Change and
Civic Engagement:
Civic Engagement and its Contribution
to Local Development

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Central Findings

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Introduction[1]

On 19 March 2009, the German Bundestag passed a resolution (record nr. 16/11774) calling on the Federal Government to regularly submit a scientific report to parliament on the development of civic engagement in Germany. This resolution requires a report to be submitted once per legislative term, to include the government's opinion, and focus on a priority theme of engagement. The report, which is intended to serve as the basis for a sustainable engagement policy, should set out the political and scholarly discourse covering current developments, prognoses and debates in a problem-orientated manner, suggest innovative approaches for the field of civic engagement and make concrete policy recommendations to the Federal Government and other stakeholders.

The First Civic Engagement Report of the German Federal Government, which was submitted in the 17th legislative term and was entitled "For A Culture of Shared Responsibility", deals with the topic of corporate civic engagement. The Second Engagement Report, which was completed during the 18th legislative term, is devoted to the topic of "Demographic Change and Civic Engagement: Civic Engagement and its Contribution to Local Development". The Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report was primarily tasked with clarifying the following questions:

❚ In what concrete ways can voluntary engagement secure people's harmonious coexistence in towns and rural areas?

❚ How can the concept of shared responsibility in the sense of a caring community be fostered by promoting voluntary engagement? How can this be safeguarded with a particular focus on helping the elderly lead an independent life, promoting integration and supporting families?

❚ How can voluntary engagement be promoted throughout people's lives? How can impediments to engagement be overcome?

❚ In what way can engagement contribute to people's quality of life – both in rural regions as well as urban spaces which are confronted with their own specific demographic challenges and structural change?

In accordance with the remit of the report, the Second Engagement Report has a particular focus on the degree of importance accruing to the manifold types of civic participation – from classic forms of honorary office to political participation, from helping out in the neighbourhood to working on behalf of people who have fled their countries of origin – and what impact they have on efforts to cope with demographic change in towns and rural areas. It describes ways in which

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1   This Engagement Monitor was compiled by Prof. Dr Thomas Klie (Chairman of the Second Engagement Report Commission), Anna Wiebke Klie and Silke Marzluff (Business Office of the Second Engagement Report, zze) on the basis of the long version of the Second Engagement Report.

active local engagement can be promoted, what conditions need to be in place for engagement to prove a success, and makes recommendations for action.

The Commission was particularly keen to follow a dialogue-based approach, which it facilitated through public discussions of the topics, as well as workshops, consultations and three local fora for dialogue. Thanks to the events organised by the Commission, it was possible to initiate lively debates between scientists and politicians, specialised professionals, various social stakeholders as well as citizens themselves.

The long version of the Second Engagement Report is divided into four sections (I-IV): The first section encompasses the main points of the report and summarises its content; the general section (II) contains the **fundamental questions** and **central topics** related to engagement, whilst the focus section (III) addresses the topic of **local politics and engagement**. Finally, the recommendations for action are provided in a separate section (IV).[2]

The **General Section** of the long version of the report starts by addressing how the First Engagement Report was received, and expands on the considerations regarding civic duties which were broached in the definition of "civic engagement" in the First Engagement Report by adding a philosophical perspective with recourse to the Aristotelian concept of virtue. In a further chapter, the Second Engagement Report stresses the diversity of engagement in a civic society and uses "engagement" as an umbrella term to encompass the manifold forms of engagement undertaken by citizens shaping their society. In doing so, the Expert Commission considers the relation between engagement and civic society and understands civic society to be more than simply the "third sector" but also as the public sphere of a society which is marked by civility. Continuing the discussion in the First Engagement Report, the significance of engagement for a regulated society is considered from the perspective of economic theory, and an attempt is then made to systematise these considerations using the theory of public goods. In a further chapter, the Commission examines engagement within the political context of demographics and in doing so, picks up on questions of social change, of ethno-cultural pluralisation and digitalisation and how they affect people's ways of life. In addition, the Second Engagement Report includes comprehensive current statistics related to engagement, and devotes individual chapters to the core engagement-related debates. Finally, the discussions of refugees and migration are accompanied by an excursus on the phenomenon of right-wing extremism (as the "dark side" of civil society). Furthermore, extensive attention is also devoted to the monetarisation of engagement, the importance of education for and through engagement, the connection between participation and engagement, questions related to services of public interest and their relevance for engagement, as well as the areas of social enterprises, cooperatives and engagement as an expression of the manner in which forms of engagement are changing.

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2   In this Engagement Monitor, selected topics and findings from the Second Engagement Report are presented. Hence, it does not reflect the report and the views of the Commission entirely and only summarises central aspects. In order to create a more legible format, citations were not included in this Monitor; they can be found in full in the Second Engagement Report.

The **Focus Section** begins by establishing the current state of research and debate surrounding local engagement policy. This is followed by an assessment of the role the municipal authorities should play in the provision of services of general interest, before examining the structural differences and particular challenges affecting engagement at the regional and local levels. In a separate chapter, there follows a description of the various "spatial faces" of demographic change in the context of which engagement is not only understood to be a reaction to the processes of demographic change; indeed, the structural preconditions for engagement and political participation are also described and considered. Then, in the context of selected key topics and policy areas at a local level which are relevant to engagement, it is possible to establish that state support for engagement and civil society developments cover two very different fields. The key areas presented include mobility, climate and energy policy, civil protection, healthcare, care and support, culture and sport. The chapter Local Governance, Engagement and Civil Society with its perspective on the model of the "citizens' municipality", closes the focus section of the report by reiterating how dependent engagement policy is on productive, multisectoral cooperation.

The final section of the report contains the findings and recommendations for engagement policy both at the national level, as well as for a multi-tier engagement policy at the Federal, *Land* and municipal levels.

The Commission for the Second Engagement Report would like to stress that one of the more positive social developments of the past decade has been the way in which voluntary engagement has increasingly become an integral part of the lives of large sections of the German population. However, this is not true to the same degree for all regions or all social groups: The Commission believes that German society is exhibiting increasing levels of social inequality, which are leading to unequal levels of participation in volunteer work by people across the social classes – more prosperous people tend to participate more. The Commission believes that in cases where the forces of social exclusion are at work, voluntary engagement, which is supposed to benefit all of society, can actually contribute to increasing and reinforcing social inequality.

The essential prerequisites and framework conditions for encouraging and promoting engagement in all its variety and its civic orientation must be sustained or created at all levels of government so that the positive effects of engagement can be felt in all regions and by all sections of the population. An engagement policy which seeks to confront regional and local inequalities must focus its attention primarily on less-favoured regions. It is frequently the case that people's sense of solidarity and their willingness to participate in engagement is particularly pronounced due to their sense of connection to place.

I.

Key Statements in the Second Engagement Report

1. Citizens tend to confront social challenges proactively.

A number of social challenges have arisen out of demographic, cultural and social change. These can only be shaped by comprehensive, open and respectful collaboration between citizens and the state. In this context, the current challenges surrounding the issue of refugees have revealed the extent to which Germany contains a lively and innovative civil society. This confirms the trend indicating an increase in engagement in its various forms.

2. Shared responsibility amongst citizens is increasing and takes many forms.

The numerous studies confirming rising levels of voluntary engagement only partially reflect the variety of ways in which citizens adopt social responsibility. Engagement takes both a formal and informal shape, and takes place in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. It involves people having a say and making a practical contribution to their communities, it involves people organising activities which preserve and activities which innovate, and it combines sociability with social duty. Engagement should therefore be understood henceforth as an umbrella term. To this end, the Second Engagement Report formulates a concept for studying and describing engagement in all its many forms. In addition, a case also needs to be made for formulating a clear set of ground rules which deal with non-democratic and uncivil forms of engagement.

3. Engagement is based on the exercise of free will. It should not be functionalised.

By making use of individual and socio-ethical considerations, the Commission stresses the citizens' sense of personal responsibility with regard to engagement. It is this expression of free will which gives rise to engagement as the free expression of individual conduct. In this respect, engagement becomes a way of negotiating values at a local level. The report describes this tension between the individual and society. If engagement is to be reinforced as conduct arising as an expression of free will, then steps must be taken to ensure that engagement is not exploited for other purposes. A variety of approaches to remunerating voluntary engagement will be examined and the case will be made for compiling a set of regulations to clarify ways in which the issue of money should be handled with respect to engagement.

Established discourse is opened up by positioning engagement within a regulatory framework, that is by placing it within the integrated statutory framework governing economic activity.

4. An active state and active citizens are two sides of the same coin.

Data gathered from across Europe show the following: In open societies in which the population feel secure, feel that they can become involved in politics and where the correct degree of attention is paid to social balance and cohesion, larger numbers of citizens will become involved in voluntary engagement. Engagement therefore has its roots in an active state and is based on a set of conditions for which the state is responsible. Structural conditions which are conducive to encouraging engagement on a local and regional basis will also be the subject of scrutiny.

5. Active participation by citizens requires "Good Governance".
The conditions underlying a good life for citizens are established in the places where people live. These towns and villages need new forms of cooperative government and administration in the sense of Good Governance. All of society's stakeholders must be involved in those public service tasks which form the basis of a good life and which guarantee self-determination and social participation. Political participation and engagement go hand in hand with public services, and are interrelated in the model of the citizens' municipality, in which citizens also make a significant contribution.

6. A policy of engagement is a key element in forward-looking policy-making by parliament and the government.
A policy of engagement is not distinct from sectoral policies, and should become established as a cross-sectional task. Furthermore, there is a need – within the bounds of cooperative federalism – for an overarching concept and a clearly defined remit for engagement which adds to its profile as a policy area in its own right.

The significance of engagement for a society experiencing demographic change necessitates a reappraisal of the subsidiarity principle. Local politics are central to coping with the challenges of the future. A policy of engagement is needed which deals sensitively with the willingness of citizens to adopt a sense of social responsibility.

II.
Voluntary Engagement – Core Topics and Fundamental Questions

1. Voluntary Engagement – Fundamental Questions

1.1 The Variety of Engagement in a Civil Society

The Expert Commission is seeking to develop a concept of engagement which incorporates all its various forms, thereby distancing itself from the notion of "civic engagement" albeit without compromising the significance or the tradition of debates regarding civic engagement. Indeed, it is particularly important in local politics to respect the variety of ways in which people take responsibility on whatever scale, large or small.

"Engagement" is an appropriate umbrella term for the actions and activities undertaken by volunteers with and on behalf of others, and is broad enough to encompass a diversity of forms. By using a broad definition of engagement, the intention is to prevent terminological considerations from selectively isolating specific types of engagement, something which might lead to simplifications and the exclusion of some major areas. In addition, a broadly-framed definition of engagement also makes it clear that beyond the essential safeguarding and recognition of engagement, a set of specific concepts is required which does justice to the particular features of engagement in all its various forms. In this case too, the focus will be on the local level in all its multidimensionality, and on people's ability to organise themselves (subsidiary conception of social structures).

The varying forms of engagement are demonstrated in the following dichotomies which illustrate the tension between the different characteristics of engagement: Engagement between ...

▎ ... **volunteer work** *and* **codetermination**: on the one hand, volunteer work in the sense of becoming involved in practical activities, for example in sport, culture, the environment etc. on the other hand (democratic) dialogue or having a say in decision-making, in other words engagement with a closer connection to politics through grass-roots participation, protest or negotiation processes in political institutions.

▎ ... **preservation** *and* **innovation**: on the one hand the preservation of cultural patterns and sense of orientation which are defining features of a local community; on the other hand embracing novelty brought about by movements for renewal and reform, and utopias for social change.

▎ ... **informal** *and* **organised** engagement: on the one hand informal engagement in loose networks with non-binding structures (for example in neighbourhoods); on the other hand formally organised engagement in associations or cooperatives.

- ... **"working with others in mind"** *and* **"working with ourselves in mind"**: on the one hand, engagement which aims at the integration and participation of people who are threatened by marginalisation (in the sense of "bridging"); on the other hand engagement which is primarily focused on encouraging cohesion within one's own social group ("bonding").
- ... **sociability** *and* **the pursuit of purpose**: social interaction and the cultivation of relationships have a particular purpose which is being pursued through people's engagement.
- ... **the self** *and* **professionally organised action**: The main focus of engagement can on the one hand lie in people organising themselves and being involved in their communities, and on the other hand in professional organisations in which participating members are subject to regulated, professional structures.

Several hybrid types exist between these pairings. Policy-making in general, and engagement policy in particular, should be related to these various forms of engagement.

The Commission understands engagement as being a part of civil society which represents something more than just the "third" sector, in which non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations act on a voluntary, self-organised and not-for-profit basis. The Commission understands civil society to be the public, intermediary domain in which it is possible to discuss and align the interests of various groups in the public sphere. In this intermediary public domain, it is possible to renegotiate and relegitimate the focus of civic society and its characteristics over and over again. Crucially, however, there must be a values-based quality to engagement which helps to cultivate and strengthen civil society. A society is "civil" inasmuch as it treats different people's ways of life with respect and openness, resolves conflicts fairly and places limits on power and self-interest. Beyond that, it is also able to establish effective institutions, forms of participation and to mediate between differing social interests. In this context, its fundamental framework conditions are paramount: the rule of law, democracy, human rights and the welfare state, all of which provide people with opportunities to develop their potential for social participation, their sense of civic orientation and their subsequent engagement.

This sense of openness to the manifold forms of engagement and a nuanced, values-orientated understanding of civil society are also reflected in the Commission's policy recommendations: With a view to *uncivil* forms of engagement, the Commission believes there is a need for clear rules to be drawn up and boundaries to be delineated.

Engagement and civil society are being placed at the heart of the debate regarding sustainable societies. In this context it is important to draw up a set of framework conditions for vibrant civil societies which provide people with incentives and possibilities for voluntary engagement. These are the **structural characteristics of societies** which possess a strong civil society.

1.2 The Case for a Philosophical Viewpoint

The Second Engagement Report also draws on the concept of virtue in the scientific and social dialogue surrounding voluntary engagement and civil society. If the moral sense of the concept is left aside and virtue is understood as an attitude, it can contribute to tracing the connection between people's personal freedom and their decision to make a contribution to society. The Aristotelean concept of virtue stresses that the citizen's individual willingness to take responsibility, and the engagement that results from it, is a matter of choice which is made freely by each individual person. Entering into a discussion as an act of engagement serves to further people's understanding of values and standards and can therefore contribute to aligning individual people's interests with the demands placed on them by society.

The attitudes and actions which are most important for shaping the community are reflected in the civic virtues which are related to engagement and participation in equal measure. The Commission believes that in contrast to their sense of virtue, people would only feel duty-bound to become involved in engagement if the state specifically sought to mobilise its citizens, thereby saving on other resources by doing so. People's freedom to become involved in engagement and their creative energy in doing so flourish best in cases where citizens feel responsible for the issues affecting them, either out of a sense of justice, an interest in others, a sense of concern, a sense of joy in particular aspects of life, or enjoyment in doing something in the community of others. People's overwhelming willingness to help refugees has shown how individual people with this sense of virtue react flexibly and open-mindedly to changes in society, because their motivation to do so is inherent in themselves – and not a task which has been imposed upon them. Here, the Commission reflects upon the ethical dimension of engagement in parallel to the scientific debate on engagement.

1.3 Regulating Engagement: A Theory of Public Space

The Second Engagement Report picks up on the theory of public goods which was discussed in an economic context in the First Engagement Report, and broadens it into a theory of public space. To accomplish this, the importance of engagement is allocated a place in the regulatory conception of society and the economy, with the theory of public goods being used in an attempt to provide system and order. By doing so, civic discourse is opened up further and the economic discussion is given further impetus.

Through their engagement, citizens make a voluntary and unique contribution to shaping public space. In Hannah Arendt's understanding (*The Human Condition*), this is a realm of action beyond the private realm, in which the state, market and civil society act in concert within the state-imposed order and resolve conflicts. Engagement, as an act of free choice, can be located somewhere between the realm of private activity and state action. In tapping into both realms, and intertwined in both, civil society – understood here in the sense of the "third" sector of society – develops and takes effect. In formulating a regulatory framework for engagement and developing a theory of public space to go with it, the important general and binding starting points are provided by the essential characteristics of social order: *the empowerment of people and inalienable human rights, the rule of law and sovereignty of the people, representative democracy and the separation of powers, private property and freedom of contract, legal liability and procedural justice.*

1.4 Voluntary Engagement and Social Cohesion in a Time of Demographic Change

Our society is ageing and becoming increasingly diverse. People's life situations are becoming increasingly varied on both a local and a regional level. Some of the core indicators of change include the gerontification of society, a consistent trend towards lower birth rates, declining population levels across several regions and an **ethno-cultural pluralisation** of the population.

Demographic change is closely interconnected with those social upheavals which form an integral part of the times in which we live. The dynamics and structure of the population are closely linked to changes in society, the economy and technology, as well as changing social and cultural values and people's life situations.

One critical factor here is represented by **migration processes** as the result of people moving within Germany as well as due to immigration from abroad. The proportion of the population with a migration background continues to be fairly small in the non city states among the eastern German *Länder*. In the western German metropolitan areas and in the Stuttgart region, however, they make up a third of the entire population. In some large cities such as Frankfurt am Main, people with a migration background will soon make up half of the entire population. Their proportion of the population will continue to climb in the coming year based on predictions for the continued arrival of asylum seekers with prospects for remaining in the country. Voluntary engagement can in this case help to reinforce social cohesion and support the integration process.

In rural areas which are experiencing a decline in population, intelligent concepts and voluntary engagement have a part to play in protecting threatened infrastructures. But because time is the key resource of voluntary engagement, improving the compatibility of work, family and engagement must be at the core of government policy on family and engagement.

Secularisation means that the number of people participating in religious life in the Protestant and Catholic churches is declining. The churches are seeing a steady decrease in their membership. At the same time, the level of engagement in the churches and in the fields in which they are active seems to have remained stable and is continuing to grow. Dedicated members of church communities continue to take on and hold honorary positions, for example in sporting or social contexts. Although institutionalised religion in the Christian churches is in a state of decline, there is an increasing diversity of faiths, or **religious pluralism**. For migrants from predominantly Islamic countries, religion is often the focal point around which they structure their way of life, and encourages people to volunteer to help others.

Electronic and (internet-based) **digital media** create opportunities and also generate risks for engagement and participation in social life. They can serve to provide access to and support participation in various types of engagement. They promote faster communication, inter-regional networking and the mobilisation of spontaneous initiatives as and when they arise (such as

disaster protection and providing support for refugees). They can be used to create new types of short-term relief organisations. In contrast, however, virtual relationships can lead to a loss of social connections and also cause the voluntary members of associations and organisations to abandon their honorary positions in favour of internet-based projects which do not fall under the aegis of any specific organisation. Concerns have also been raised about a "digital divide" arising due to the exclusion of socially and educationally disadvantaged people and the elderly from Web 2.0. It is for this reason that internet-based channels of communication, and the related opportunities for engagement which go hand in hand with them, need to be strategically developed.

1.5 Engagement in Numbers

The chapter entitled "Engagement in Numbers" draws systematically upon empirical sources which paint a comprehensive and diverse picture of engagement in Germany and Europe. Studies tend to focus on rates of engagement, which are assembled from the sum of people's levels of participation. Several studies have confirmed that levels of engagement are on the increase (see Figure 1 for examples). Some possible explanations for this include the growth in those particular demographic groups whose members tend to participate in society more readily, or changes in people's circumstances which make engagement easier. In addition, this chapter describes the way each of the respective surveys is designed and highlights the need to reflect critically upon their methodological approach, sampling and operationalisation of variables like engagement, and what influence these have on the final results.

The empirical data which was analysed was taken from several different studies which together indicate the following trends:[3]

❙ For Europe, empirical evidence shows that political and voluntary engagement are most likely to take place in societies which enjoy a broad range of social and welfare safeguards and in which people have comprehensive rights to a political say. Incentives and structures which promote civic participation are important in vibrant civic societies. These in turn require an effective state monopoly on the use of force, the rule of law, justice as the guarantor of social equity, openness, and opportunities for people to participate fully in society. These might be described as the "structural characteristics of societies" which mark out strong civil societies.

❙ More people participate in civil society in the western German *Länder* than in the eastern *Länder* (Table 1).

❙ Women still tend to be less involved than men (Table 2) and tend to become involved in different fields of engagement (Table 3). In addition, women tend to take on leadership roles less often than men. In related "informal" areas such as providing help and support, women are however somewhat more active than men.

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3   The general trends listed here are based on The German Survey on Volunteering 2014 (Simonson et al. 2016) and further studies. Depending on the methodological design and the method of calculation used, the statistically recorded developmental tendencies in voluntary engagement tend to vary between studies undertaken over a given time period. In addition to the example percentages provided here in individual footnotes or depicted in the diagrams or accompanying explanatory notes, further more detailed and occasionally varying figures can be found in the chapter "Engagement in Numbers" in the long version of the Second Engagement Report.

▌ With respect to age, an increase in the number of active young people was registered, especially in the age groups from 14/15 to 19 years. This increase was not only observable in the fringe areas of less dedicated engagement, but also in the core areas involving people who were more permanently integrated and people holding honorary office.[4]

▌ There is currently a particularly high number of volunteers among the age group of people aged 60 to approximately 75. In the past decades, older people from the age of 60 upwards have contributed considerably to the increase in the core area of people who are permanently involved in engagement or who hold honarary office. As it stands, the number of people holding honorary office appears to rise among people in their initial retirement years (Figure 2). Future studies will reveal whether this development is set to continue in this age group.

▌ People with a migrant background tend to have a lower rate of engagement than people without a migrant background. However, the "second" or "third" generations who were born in Germany are considerably more involved than people who have first-hand experience of migration (Figure 2). Additionally, education and income levels also have an influence on levels of engagement among people with a history of migration. If these two factors are taken into account, the rates of engagement start to converge.

▌ The large number of people seeking refuge in Germany from the summer of 2015 onwards has generated a significant increase in engagement, practical help, and material and financial donations for the refugees: Almost half of all people living in Germany were involved in one of these forms of activity. New and innovative forms of voluntary engagement for helping the refugees have also come into being.

▌ The reasons people cite for becoming involved in engagement have seen a rise in people's desire for self-development in addition to unselfish (altruistic) motives. People's reasons are influenced by factors such as age, life situation or activities which are best suited to themselves individually.

▌ Engagement in rural areas is more pronounced than in cities (Table 4). In addition to where people live, their socio-economic milieu is also relevant as it is also shaped in different ways by the unemployment rate or the strength of the economy.

▌ The organisational contexts in which engagement takes place have not fundamentally changed. Engagement continues to take place largely in clubs, associations and religious/church organisations. In addition, recent years have seen an increase in the founding of charitable foundations, non-profit companies with limited liabilities (gGmbHs) and cooperatives.

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4   The German Survey on Volunteering 2014 indicated a steep increase in the number of 14 to 19 year-olds involved in engagement from 36 % (2009) to 52 %. The data from the European Social Survey (ESS) for the time period 2006 to 2012 show that the proportion of those in the 15-19 age group who participated in civil society organisations at least once every half year rose from 39 to 54 %. The Allensbach Media Market Analysis (AWA) (2000–2014) recorded an increase in the number of people holding honorary office from 9 to 12 % for the age group 14 to under 20 years (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Active Participants (at least once every six months) and Honorary Office Holders by Age Group
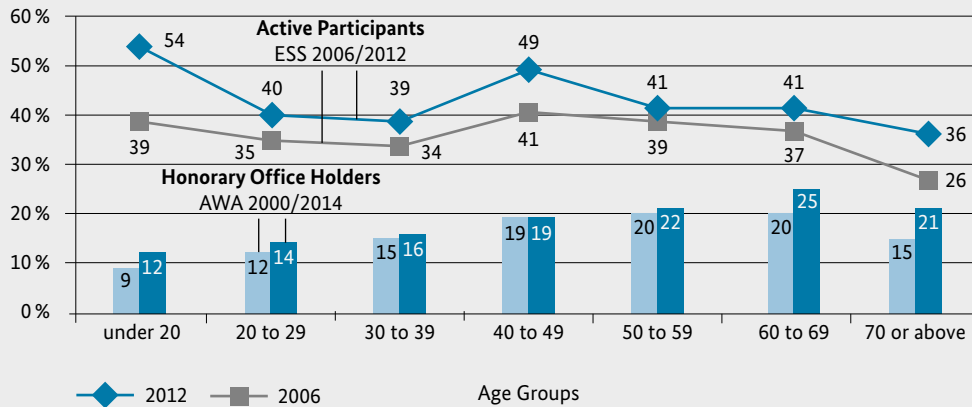
Source: Calculation by the Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report. Basis: ESS 2006, 2012; AWA 2000, 2014. Federal Republic of Germany, AWA over 14 years of age; ESS over 15 years of age.

By way of illustration, the two uppermost lines in Figure 1 show the findings of the European Social Surveys (ESS) regarding the rise in people who were active in society during the time period 2006 to 2012 according to their age group. The two parallel bars underneath show the growth in people holding honorary office in Germany in the period 2000 to 2014 as listed in the results of the Allensbach Media Market Analysis (AWA). In the age group from 14 to under 20 years, for example, the number of people holding honorary office increased from 9 to 12 %.

Figure 2: People over 50 in Honorary Office in the Years 2000 and 2014
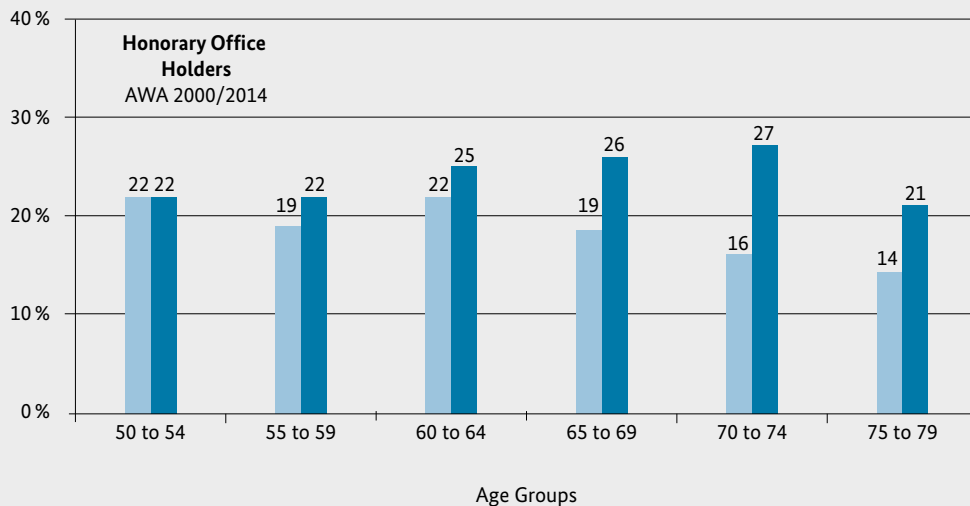
Source: Calculation by the Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report. Basis: AWA 2000, 2014. Federal Republic of Germany, Population over 50 years of age.

Figure 2 illustrates that the change in people holding honorary office is particularly high among 70 to 74-year-olds: In the year 2000, only 16 % of this age group held honorary office . In 2014, this had increased to 27 %.

Table 1: Different Levels of Engagement in Western and Eastern Germany

Number of People Involved	Total Population %	Western Germany %	Eastern Germany %
People engaged in public work (broadest circle, including occasional helpers)	45	46	40
Among which: In an official capacity or established function	22	**24**	**15**
Other types	23	22	25

Source: IfD Allensbach 2013: 8. Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population over 16 years of age.

Table 1 shows that the main differences in levels of engagement in eastern and western Germany lie primarily in the core area of regularly active people and holders of honorary office, as shown by the findings of a survey in 2013. The proportion of the population which is less permanently involved at the institutional level or which is less regularly active is however about the same in each part of Germany at 22 % and 25 % respectively.[5] Whilst the narrower circle of people involved in a permanent position or an established function (24 %) and those in the broader circle of helpers (22 %) are roughly the same size in western Germany, in eastern Germany the narrower circle of people with a permanent position or an established function is smaller than the circle of occasional helpers by a ratio of 15 % to 25 %.

Table 2: Women engage less frequently and less permanently than men

Number of People Involved	Total Population %	Men %	Women %
People engaged in public work (broadest circle, including occasionalhelpers)	45	**49**	**41**
Among which: In an official capacity or established function	22	**26**	**19**
Other types	23	23	22

Source: IfD Allensbach 2013: 8. Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population over 16 years of age.

Recent studies show that overall, women are still currently less involved in engagement than men.[6] There are, however, noticeable differences in the narrower circle of those who are more permanently involved and those who are active on a regular basis: Women take on fewer honorary roles and established functions (19 %) than men (26 %). In contrast, the numbers of less permanently involved helpers among women and men were about the same size at 22 % and 23 % respectively (Table 2).

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5   Possible random fluctuations should be factored in here.
6   The German Survey on Volunteering 2014 shows participation rates for women and men at 42 % and 46 % respectively. Most of the more recent surveys show corresponding differences.
    According to the 2012/13 Time Use Study by the German Federal Statistical Office, women are more likely to be active as helpers in areas immediately outside the family (44 % as against 38 % of men).
    Over the long term, rates of engagement have converged significantly. In 1954, for example, only 2 % of women were in honorary positions (as against 14 % of men). In 2013, this had already risen to 15 %. In the past few decades, women have to some degree worked to establish themselves in the field of engagement outside the family.

Table 3: Areas in which Men and Women are Active

Participation by Category:	Total Population	
	Men %	Women %
Sport	**23**	10
Emergency Services (e.g. Volunteer Fire Brigade or Lifeboat Association)	**11**	3
Civic Activities in Hometown	**10**	6
Politics	**9**	3
Trades Unions, Professional Associations, Unemployment Initiative	5	2
Church or Religion	7	**9**
Health and Social Sectors	5	**9**
School or Kindergarten	4	**12**

Source: Allensbacher Archiv, IfD Allensbach 2013: 18. Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population over 16 years of age.

Table 3 shows how the nature of engagement is shaped by the varying preferences exhibited by the two sexes: Men are far better represented in sports than women. Other traditionally male domains include the emergency services, politics, trades unions and professional associations. Women are far more involved than men in the healthcare and social sectors, in schools and kindergartens as well as in church communities and religious groups.

Figure 3: Engagement by People with a Migrant Background

The following people took on voluntary or honorary tasks in the context of their social activities:
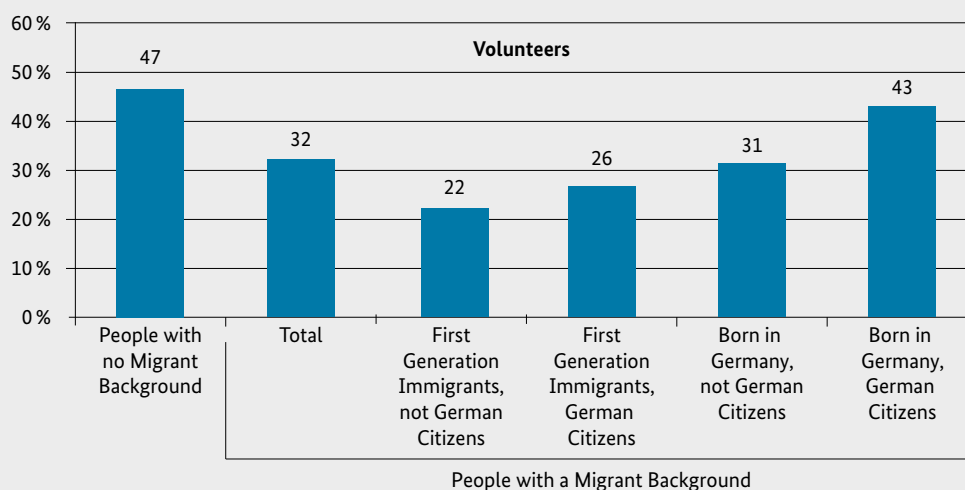
Source: Own depiction based on Simonson et al. 2016: 593. Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population over 14 years of age.

The German Survey on Volunteering 2014 differentiates between the personal experience of migration as well as the possession of German citizenship among four groups of migrants (Figure 3): Of the migrants who were born abroad and who do not possess German citizenship, the

level of engagement stands at 22 %; furthermore, only few of this group are active in society in any other way. Of those who have been migrants themselves and who now possess German citizenship, the level of engagement stands at 26 %. People in the second or third generation of families with a migrant background who were born in Germany are involved to a far greater extent: Of those who do not yet possess German citizenship, the level of engagement stands at 31 %; those with German citizenship at 43 % – that is, at a level marginally below the average level of engagement in society as a whole (44 %).

Table 4: Greater Involvement in Rural Areas

Number of People Involved	Total Population	Region		
		Cities	Medium-Sized & Small Towns	Rural Regions
	%	%	%	%
People engaged in public work (broadest circle, including occasional helpers)	45	**44**	**43**	**54**
Among which: In an official capacity or established function	22	23	20	28
Other types	23	21	23	26

Source: IfD Allensbach 2013: 9. Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population over 16 years of age.

Studies examining various types of settlement structures show marked differences in levels of engagement between rural and urban regions. The German Survey on Volunteering 2014 shows an engagement rate of 46 % for rural regions with population centres, and a rate of only 39 % for cities. The rates of engagement differ more in the survey shown here, which does not differentiate between population numbers, but rather by the description of a settlement's character at the place of residence. Accordingly, the difference in engagement rates between rural (54 %) and urban regions (43/44 %) stands at 10 or 11 %. Also, in rural regions, the core of people involved who have a permanent position or an established function (28 %) and those in the broader circle of occasional helpers and supporters (26 %) are both larger than in the urban context (Table 4).

2.   Voluntary Engagement – Core Issues

2.1 Refugees and Engagement

It is in addressing the topic of immigration and refugees that the importance of voluntary engagement and a vibrant civil society in Germany is really driven home: without the wide-ranging, spontaneous engagement of citizens on behalf of the refugees, the state would never be able to meet the huge task of providing humanitarian support and the challenges posed by integration. The *refugee question* and the implementation of policy are closely accompanied by controversial approaches to dealing with this issue. Besides high levels of voluntary engagement, there has also been a visible increase in forms of protest and (violent) resistance which are often clearly motivated by xenophobia. The arrival of large numbers of refugees seems to have polarised the country.

Nevertheless, studies show that people's levels of engagement are showing no signs of diminishing: on the contrary, people are citing a broad variety of reasons for (re)starting, continuing or even expanding their engagement. And this is often in spite of bureaucratic hurdles and high demands being placed on people. However, there is a wide range of support services to which people have access, including language courses, material (clothes, furniture etc.) and financial donations, translation support and assistance when dealing with government agencies, sponsoring, guardianship and mentoring programmes, as well as psychological and medical care services.

The Commission sees considerable potential for innovation in the dynamism of people's efforts on behalf of refugees, and the possibility of enduring changes in the engagement landscape itself, which is being confronted with new challenges. This might well mean that traditional forms and conceptions of cooperation and the division of work between full-time employed staff and volunteers might need to undergo fundamental realignment due to changes in expectations, areas of competence and the allocation of people's roles. Cooperation between civil society and economic and political stakeholders is vital for this to happen. But above all, the Commission believes it is necessary to have a transparent and reliable government refugee policy, which uses clear concepts and guarantees of safety and security to create a set of framework conditions which encourage citizens to engage in *civic* action, and to secure these conditions with the necessary packages of measures.

2.2 Migration and Engagement

Out of a total population of 80.9 million people living in Germany, around 16.4 million people had a migrant background in 2014, 9.2 million possessed German nationality and 7.2 million were foreign nationals. This means that every fifth person living in Germany has a migrant background. Previous studies have shown that on average, people with a migrant background (measured as a proportion of the population as a whole) are less involved in voluntary engagement and are underrepresented in the classic civil society fields and institutions of mainstream society such as the volunteer fire department. The reasons for this lie in socio-economic, migration-specific and cultural factors, as well as in people experiencing discrimination, a lack of openness to processes of intercultural change and low levels of information and target group orientation. However, the proportion of those involved in engagement is influenced greatly by their type of migrant background. People with a migrant background who were born in Germany – the "second generation" who possess German nationality – make up the largest group involved in voluntary engagement (Figure 3). Having German nationality, having undergone a period of socialisation or having spent a lengthy period of time in the country all have a positive effect on people's willingness to participate in engagement, and alignment processes appear to take place over the course of the generations. Since all groups exhibit a high level of willingness to participate in engagement, there is a high degree of potential for voluntary engagement here. Existing barriers which are blocking people's access to civil society fields and institutions must therefore be identified and removed.

The discussion regarding the degree to which voluntary engagement within migrant organisations and networks aims to either insulate a group from the rest of German society (bonding) or encourage integration (bridging) should be conducted on a case-by-case basis and avoid sweeping generalisations. By drawing up clear regulations and boundaries, the government should support only those forms of engagement which promote integration, civic and public service and support services. In addition, the government should take into account different culture-specific understandings of engagement, people's different underlying motivations and the great importance of comprehensive intercultural opening processes and cooperation. It will also be necessary to establish a close link between integration policies and government support for voluntary engagement.

2.3 Excursus: Right-Wing Extremism – The Dark Side of Civil Society

All questions pertaining to voluntary engagement and the integration of immigrants, and the provision of accommodation and care for refugees, are inextricably intertwined with the presence of prejudice, discrimination and, in the worst cases, racially-motivated acts of violence against immigrants.

In both the academic and real-world struggle with right-wing extremism, the normative use of the term civil society is in widespread use. The task at hand is to develop an understanding of engagement which is bound to human rights and which is clearly distinguishable from uncivil forms of right-wing engagement which should not be considered eligible for support (i.e. the "dark" or "brown" civil society). Engagement is all about civilised interactions between individuals and groups who feel committed to a given set of values, namely the rule of law, respect for human dignity, participation in society, justice, freedom from violence, and tolerance.

Xenophobic and racist attitude patterns are in no way peripheral social phenomena, but penetrate deep into the heart of society. Academic research warns of increased radicalisation, militancy and the brutalisation of certain activities among xenophobic sections of the population, and an increased danger being posed to democracy. Indeed, a noteworthy increase in right-wing violence has been recorded, not least in the context of the marches organised by Pegida.[7] Further worrying developments are the growing antipathy and animosity shown towards Sinti and Roma (antiziganism), Islamophobia and the denigration of asylum seekers.

In academic scholarship and in practice alike, it has been possible to identify successful ways of combating right-wing extremism.

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7   Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident).

How work undertaken to combat right-wing extremism can be enhanced:

❙ By developing a comprehensive action plan which examines the root causes of right-wing extremist and right-wing populist successes together with all forms of discrimination.

❙ By helping people to help themselves: Supporting victims and potential groups of victims, and by expanding cooperation with migrant organisations and refugee groups.

❙ By providing sustained (financial) support to secure civil society's regional infrastructure, which includes competence centres, networking facilities, advisory networks and victim advice centres.

❙ By reducing red tape in funding programmes to enable small civil society initiatives to profit from them.

❙ By supporting local partnerships and broad alliances against extreme right-wing activities consisting of democratic political parties, public authorities and administration, the police, civil society initiatives, religious institutions, migrant organisations and trades unions.

❙ By having democratic parties and local politicians take a clear position on how to deal with right-wing extremism.

❙ By promptly addressing and presciently dealing with local problems and the existing concerns of citizens.

2.4 Monetarisation of Engagement

In the vast majority of cases, voluntary engagement is not subject to remuneration. Indeed, the Commission sees this as being one of the defining characteristics of voluntary engagement. Nevertheless, certain forms of monetarisation – for the most part monetary payments for services which had previously been rendered without any kind of recompense – are becoming increasingly important. Whilst the political debate continues to stress non-remuneration as a core characteristic of engagement, the legal framework conditions have been loosened in favour of remuneration. It is also increasingly common in the third sector, i.e. in associations and churches, to find discussions taking place regarding the correct way of dealing with the payment of honorary office holders.

It would be desirable to have a solid base upon which to take action, and a workable regulatory system for dealing with monetary payments for engagement. In addition, it would be helpful to empirically identify the different manifestations of monetarisation, such as the quantitative extent to which people make use of tax credits to which they are entitled for undertaking paid work in their community, known in German tax law as the *Übungsleiterpauschale*.

From the perspective of the Commission, four core questions need to be answered:

1. How can engagement and paid work be clearly differentiated from one another?
2. What effects do economic considerations have on honorary office/voluntary engagement?
3. How can the guarantee liability be upheld for various tasks related to public services?
4. What is the correct way of handling the increased use of voluntary – including remunerated – engagement work as a consequence of rising costs for charitable organisations?

The Commission considers it important to name the opportunities and risks associated with monetarisation, in order to be able to identify ways in which the state and associations themselves can exercise control over it. Trends in monetarisation need to be examined, taking into account the various distinct regional structural characteristics and the calculations of the various stakeholders. The Commission is formulating a set of demands and recommendations for the Federal authorities, the *Länder* and charitable associations, which raise issues pertaining to priority-setting in the funding of voluntary engagement.

2.5 Engagement and Education

Voluntary engagement and education exert a considerable degree of influence on each other. People's point of entry into engagement is largely determined by their education, especially at an early stage in their lives – although it plays an influential role for older people too. Education can be both a precondition for voluntary engagement, but it can also be understood as a potential consequence of it too. Of particular interest here are early childhood and school education. This includes *formal learning* and *non-formal learning* (organised training and education which is voluntary but which takes place in a formal setting) and i*nformal learning* (conscious and unconscious learning in everyday life).

In recent years, **voluntary services** in the education sector have become increasingly numerous and been supported by public policy. These "learning services" give their participants a significant say in their own learning objectives. In addition to offering training and seminar days (non-fomal learning opportunities), voluntary engagement in a not-for-profit organisation also contributes to people's informal education.

Voluntarily taking on responsibility bears considerable educational potential. One important contributor here is **Civic Education**, which aims at training people's attitudes, willingness and ability to participate in the co-determination and cooperative construction of social processes. This kind of "learning of democracy" is increasingly being included in early childhood learning, is often an integral part of child and youth work programmes and is growing in importance within the school environment when it comes to teaching children social skills and how to act in a democratic manner.

A further central aspect is **Service Learning**, in which school children – in the course of a teaching unit – participate in projects within the community. Several studies show that service learning is well-suited to stimulating children's interest in voluntary engagement, to promoting their personal and vocational skills, and to increasing their motivation to go to school. A considerable degree of importance is therefore attached to providing training for teaching staff, the opening up of institutions, and networking with local partners in the community.

If **communal educational landscapes** can be formed which systematically create networks consisting of different educational venues and institutions in the social environment, and provide people of all ages with better conditions and possibilities for education, then education will become a central factor in local engagement policies.

2.6 Political Participation and Voluntary Engagement

Engagement and political participation are both part and parcel of a democratic society. Nevertheless, debates regarding engagement and political participation have so far taken place on two parallel tracks. However, the Federal, *Länder* and municipal authorities would be well advised to conceive of political participation and voluntary engagement in closer combination when formulating their engagement policy.

Research on engagement stresses the potential for mutual enhancement which exists between political participation and voluntary engagement, and draws attention to the existence of hybrid forms or grey zones in which having a say, shared decision-making and voluntary engagement commingle. The interplay between both types of activity and their basic preconditions should be more intensely researched in the future, because the information available regarding the potential connections between political participation and opportunities for participation on the one hand, and voluntary engagement on the other, is very patchy. It is extremely difficult to determine current connections and interdependencies, for reasons which include marked differences across Europe in the measurability of non-politically motivated voluntary engagement and political participation, and the inadequacy of measurement parameters. There is a complete absence of longitudinal studies, which provide information about sequences ("first voluntary, then political engagement" or "first political participation, then engagement"). The data that are available show that extensive political participation (and the possibility for participation) lead in many cases to voluntary engagement, and there is much to suggest that political participation and engagement in the area of voluntary work – in the sense of providing assistance to others – actually enhance each other. Hence, when people decide to become involved in a certain type of engagement, they are frequently becoming involved in other forms of engagement by association.

For a number of years, various internet-based forms of e(lectronic)-communication, electronic information provision and eParticipation have been discussed under the umbrella term of eDemocracy. Many municipalities look to online procedures particularly because they provide a low-cost point of access. However, the limits of these procedures have also be known for some time. The "digital divide" between various sections of the population is of central importance here: Young people use the internet more often than older people, and people with a higher income tend to have better access to the necessary technologies. Initial hopes that these new online procedures would raise people's interest in democracy and participation have yet to be fulfilled. There are no clear indications that political interest or even political engagement have increased as the result of online procedures.

2.7 Services of General Interest and Engagement

In local politics, services of general interest are one of the main areas of responsibility for the municipal authorities. Services of general interest are understood to broadly include public goods and services which serve the common good and allow people to lead a fulfilling life, i.e. to enjoy a **good life in the local area**.

Because regional development is characterised by the ongoing division of regions into a few with demographic and economic growth and a large number which are shrinking or stagnating, questions regarding the sustainability of services of general interest are becoming ever more pressing. The challenge of providing **equivalent living conditions**, i.e. comparable life circumstances across the different regions of Germany, is becoming increasingly pronounced. This becomes particularly apparent if one compares neighbouring villages or urban neighbourhoods. Here, services of general interest take on a twofold meaning: To a large degree, they determine the framework conditions within which people live, enjoy their quality of life and lead fulfilling lives. On the other hand, services of general interest are a major locational factor: Their quality is critically important to the future prospects of a locality or region.

For this reason, the Commission sees the **Capability Approach** as being decisive: The objective of the state should be to create the conditions that enable every citizen and every social group in society to lead a good life and decide freely for themselves, and offer them equal opportunities to take part in the life of their community. In practice, the state, municipalities, citizens and commercial enterprises often work in parallel and even together in many services of general interest, for example in healthcare, care for the elderly, or mobility. Public services of general interest are therefore given the task of coordinating and managing fields of activity for which public or municipal authorities are responsible.

In this context, the possibilities and limitations of independently organised, voluntary services of general interest should be discussed, and the relationship between the citizens, the economy, state and administration should be recalibrated. Finally, there is the question of whether to **revise the principle of subsidiarity**. The importance of voluntary engagement for services of general interest at the communal level should be examined in the context of how big the municipalities are and what their financial capacity is, and be assessed in different ways. In addition, all future debates regarding the importance of voluntary engagement in securing services of general interest should be bound into the negotiation and participatory processes of local government more tightly, and during this process sufficient scrutiny should be applied to the opportunities it presents, as well as its risks and limitations.

2.8 Social Enterprises, Cooperatives and Engagement

In many places, new forms of social economy initiatives and concepts are to be found which are being discussed under the headings of "social enterprises" and "cooperatives".

The concept of **Social Entrepreneurship** functions as a linguistic melting pot for organisations and activities which often have very different legal or organisational forms, or mixed structures. Social entrepreneurship pursues a host of different aims such as fighting poverty, promoting healthcare, or preventing climate change. As a result, there is a tendency for entrepreneurial approaches to fluctuate between attempting to take a more social attitude towards business whilst at the same time applying the logic of the free market to the third sector. It is often the case that the focus here is on added social value rather than trying to turn a profit. Social enterprises can be understood as an attempt to advance a social or technical idea. This is why they can

also be seen as a social learning environment or even part of the education system. It is here that strong parallels to engagement become apparent through the dedicated work of the contributors, their self-esteem and the potential for increasing the visibility of certain issues.

Cooperatives occasionally operate in competition with state and market-based services or serve to supplement these sectors in cases where deficiencies in state or market-based services need to be compensated for. Cooperatives are distinctive for the particular way in which property and participation are interlinked, and are taken up in the Second Engagement Report in the context of housing associations and cooperatives for the elderly (*Seniorengenossenschaften*). One particular characteristic of cooperatives lies in the collaboration that takes place between its members who are ideally also staff members, co-owners and decision-makers within this legal form. Similarities to engagement arise inasmuch as cooperative collaboration is not so much about a purely business relationship, but develops as the result of solidarity and community spirit. This is apparent, for example, when help, services or products are made available to society as a whole and not just to the cooperative's direct members.

Unpaid work and individual engagement can be, but are not essential, characteristics of a cooperative. With their often social, supportive and democratic approaches, cooperatives embody approaches which coincide with an understanding of engagement and engagement policy which is not limited to any particular, specific form of activity.

The further evolution of social enterprises and cooperatives is closely linked to a civic culture of engagement, and requires appropriate legal and political framework conditions.

III.
Focus Section: Local Politics and Engagement

1. The Situation and Discussion as they Currently Stand

The Second Engagement Report is primarily concerned with local engagement policy. The underlying framework conditions underpinning engagement policy vary to the same degree as the demographic challenges with which each municipality finds itself confronted. It goes without saying that it is the municipal authorities which are at the forefront of coping with developments on a national level, whilst also dealing with their own local issues. Accommodating refugees in their communities is a prime example of how municipalities are required to implement decisions taken at the national level "on their doorstep" – and find administrative and organisational solutions at the level of local politics. Such solutions require partnerships, networks, civic participation, a shift of resources etc. In this sense, the municipalities are often something of a testbed of local politics. In the most optimal cases, innovative or even groundbreaking solutions come into being, which make it possible to improve on existing measures which have already been tried and tested. The resulting examples of best practice function as stimuli rather than "recipes" for action for other municipalities, since local circumstances mostly require local solutions.

Eighty per cent of engagement takes place in municipalities or in the local community. Providing support for voluntary engagement at a local level has become established as a field of municipal activity in its own right. The framework conditions for voluntary engagement are, in many areas of engagement – even in those beyond the immediate funding of infrastructure – the (co-) responsibility of the Federal Government and the *Länder*.

Promoting engagement at the local level is a complex issue: It is not confined to the immediate tasks usually related to municipal politics, but must also cover tasks at the different Federal levels, and in areas that are specific to certain fields (i.e. key areas of engagement).

2. Challenges at the Local Level

As a result of activities at the Federal, *Länder* and municipal levels, various sometimes competing infrastructure elements for promoting engagement have been set up or expanded on. Two challenges in particular have come to the fore which go hand in hand with engagement at the local infrastructure level and the underlying strategic approaches used by the Federal and regional authorities, namely the tenuous link (coherence) between the services provided within the local engagement landscape, and their lack of sustainability and/or durability (continuity).

Lack of Coherence: Over time, many local authorities have seen the rise of an intricate system of bodies which provide support for voluntary engagement. The activities conducted by these various entities are seldom subject to any coordination, and there is often no common strategy uniting their efforts.

Lack of Continuity: One central challenge standing in the way of integrating political initiatives in the field of voluntary engagement in Germany is posed by the precarious financial situation of many local authorities. The logic of the funding model with its in-built time limits for events and facilities means that they will probably not be sustainably financed for the whole of the funding period, or that their work will end when the funding-period runs out. If projects which have just been been hailed as "beacons of success" are allowed to collapse once their funding has expired, then the logic behind the model programmes must be called into question.

The most recent literature on promoting engagement at the local level stresses that a coordinated policy of engagement at all levels of political authority, and/or new **process-orientated and dialogue-orientated funding procedures** should enable local authorities to implement their own engagement-related projects. The Federal and regional authorities should therefore be looking in the first instance at addressing their policy at local politics and government. The measures undertaken by the Federal and *Länder* authorities should be designed in such a way to make it possible to easily integrate them into local engagement policies which, in many cases, have to be developed by the various local stakeholders in the first place. The targets and measures which are designed and formulated in this process should then be brought under the funding umbrella of the Federal and *Länder* authorities.

2.1 Recommendations for Developing a Coordinated Approach to Promoting Voluntary Engagement in the Local Community

Over time, the scope of local authority activity for promoting voluntary engagement has become significantly more complex. The circle of participants and the services they offer have expanded greatly; for a long time now they have no longer been limited to volunteer organisations, senior citizens' offices, or organisations with a traditional reliance on honorary office such as civil associations, churches or welfare and youth organisations. Concepts such as Corporate Citizenship or Service Learning have served to move support for engagement into the world of companies and schools/universities. Accordingly, there is a need to develop a strategic focus and coordinate the various contributors in order to minimise competition, concentrate resources, build bridges between the various cultures of engagement and to set priorities. It has therefore become even more important to develop integrated strategies and approaches for promoting voluntary engagement in the local community. In essence, the main aim of streamlining the promotion process is to initiate a process of understanding between the various civic, state and corporate stakeholders and groups involved in voluntary engagement.

2.1.1 Coordination at the Administrative Level

An integrated and coordinated strategy for promoting engagement at the local level only makes sense if there is a framework for coordinated action within local government. In this context, it is recommended that standardised areas of responsibility be established at the administrative level wherever necessary, where appropriate as focal points in the community to promote

engagement. In organising voluntary engagement as a cross-sectional task, the construction of *internal* administrative structures should be coupled with the construction of *external* administrative structures (e.g. by using networks). This reflects new forms of cooperative integration in the field of engagement policy between state and civil society stakeholders with respect to promoting engagement.

2.1.2 Networks and Cluster Projects

There is broad agreement that closer networking between existing projects is an important precondition for coordinated engagement support at a local level. It also makes sense to cluster services wherever they share a common purpose with respect to their target groups. This might include Multi-Generational Centres, for example, the funding guidelines for which propose close networking between other institutions like kindergartens, senior citizens' offices or centres for mothers. Even a task-centred network solution or the amalgamation of specific services might be worth considering in order to ensure their funding in the long term. Indeed, building community networks has already satisfied the need for networking and coordination in a number of local government areas.

2.1.3 Participatory Funding Strategies at a Local Level

The current practice of funding voluntary engagement through the local authorities is viewed critically by the Commission. This critical stance is partly due to the funding logic of *incrementalism* which prevails in local government – this entails the granting of funding without guidelines, based on the previous year's budget, on the basis of political relations or new trends affecting single organisations – which disadvantage new initiatives in particular. The funding logic of local governments is often hard to follow and tends to prefer large organisations, such as charity or sports associations, due to their close corporatist links to the state. The Commission therefore recommends that the process of awarding new funding move towards more cross-cutting policy agendas and more participatory forms of funding, and set up a fund which can provide financial support to engagement projects. In the context of urban district planning, budgets and funds for each district are seen as being further suitable ways of developing participatory srategies for promoting engagement at a local level.

2.1.4 Promoting Associations as a Way of Promoting Engagement

Clubs and associations might be described as the organisational backbone of civil society. It is within their context that the vast majority of voluntary engagement takes place: 97 per cent of engagement undertaken by Germans in the third sector is conducted within associations of one description or another. With respect to engagement policy, promoting associations therefore also means supporting certain specific framework conditions in which engagement can flourish. It might also be worth considering more "classic" ways of promoting associations and more "modern" forms of infrastructure spending within the frame of a local government strategy for engagement, since the participating institutional stakeholders frequently have significantly different purposes in mind for promoting voluntary engagement.

2.2 Promoting Engagement in Different Rural and Urban Spaces and in Eastern Germany

2.2.1 Promoting Engagement in Rural Areas

Since the end of the 1990s, promoting engagement on a local level has been closely associated with demographic change and the challenges it has brought with it for ensuring the provision of public services. The role that civil society can play in the provision of local infrastructure is increasingly the subject of discussion. Here, the role envisaged for citizens fluctuates between that of guarantor for dwindling levels of public service and that of planners of community development processes. The core issue here is how a culture of engagement at the village level is able to react to social and/or structural changes, and how the creativity of the citizens might best be activated for the purpose of developing the community. Among the most promising instruments under consideration are so-called "future workshops" as well as concepts for participatory village and town planning. Examples of voluntary engagement in areas with a rapidly shrinking population might be so-called "community buses" or the village shop network.

Measures which have been proposed for promoting voluntary engagement in rural areas are in many ways not fundamentally different from those which have been designed for other community contexts, such as:

- promoting a culture of acknowledgement;
- establishing and supporting institutions which promote engagement;
- improving accessibility to information on holding honorary office and voluntary engagement;
- training specialists;
- integrating local businesses;
- allowing citizens a say in community decision-making processes.

2.2.2 Promoting Engagement in Urban Areas

The specific challenges of promoting engagement in large conurbations lie primarily in the large-scale urban administrations with their more specialised fields of expertise, and the more pronounced socio-spatial differences to be found in cities. Large cities are home to a greater variety of population groups, each with its own culture, language and religion, have larger populations and cover a wider area. As a consequence, it is necessary to have decentralised, spatially-arranged patterns of organisation linked to target-group specific, socio-spatial and/or neighbourhood related concepts and strategies (for promoting engagement). It is from these that action strategies emerge which seek to increase the participation of people on a low income, those who have a lower level of formal education, and people from a migrant background.

2.2.3 Promoting Engagement in Eastern Germany

Voluntary engagement and/or civil society organisations represent an important potential resource for coping with a variety of problems in the eastern German *Länder*, for example by helping to sustain elements of public infrastructure in rural regions with a sharply declining population, or by helping in the fight against right-wing extremism.

In spite of rising levels of participation in voluntary engagement, there remains a significant reservoir of unused human potential in eastern Germany. The most common barriers to people becoming involved are the comparatively high levels of unemployment and numerous precarious forms of employment. Against the background of the as yet incomplete process of social transformation in the east, there remains a lack of people who are willing to participate in engagement, as well as a dearth of information and knowledge about, for example, how official procedures are organised or how funding or financing are allocated. Entry points to voluntary engagement can be improved by developing easily accessible services and using a more personal approach. The financing – and therefore also the longevity – of civil society organisations and institutions which promote voluntary engagement should also be examined.

3. Local Politics and the Role of Local Government in Services of General Interest

For "local politics" to be able to cope with the challenges of demographic change, the various levels of local government (i.e. municipal/district authorities, local authorities, sub-local entities such as neighbourhoods and districts) need to be involved. The aim is to achieve a nuanced understanding of the complexities of local politics with respect to the various different forms of action taken and roles played by the municipal authorities. This kind of broader definition goes beyond party politics and includes social networks, associations and interest groups.

Regional and local politics lives by its network of **organisational interconnectedness**. Its different activities and services in urban and rural areas – work, (self)care, mutual care, education, recreation, mobility, accommodation – do not function in isolation, but combine to produce a convivial town or rural area. It is for this reason that the initiation, promotion and retention of these kinds of productive networks – which serve to ensure services of general interest – must be the object of local politics. It is also beneficial if energy is invested in encouraging the democratic participation of citizens at a local level with the aim of improving the quality of local politics and resisting people's general disenchantment with politics as a whole.

Administrative practices relating to the development of towns and villages already work with (planning-)units such as social areas, neighbourhoods, city regions and urban districts. But their **conception of social space** is under pressure from several directions. This is because citizens' identification areas are not necessarily the same as the sub-local planning and administrative areas identified by the towns and municipalities. But it is precisely in cases where social neighbourhoods or "caring communities" are concerned, and when a local sense of community is required, that the citizens' identification areas – inasfar as they exist – become relevant to social cohesion.

The **mandatory tasks** required of local government (e.g. in the provision of social security, sanitation, road traffic safety) stand in contrast to its **voluntary tasks**. These become visible for example in the development of infrastructure which is conducive to Multi-Generational Centres and cultural facilities, or in its policy of engagement. By successfully implementing its voluntary tasks such as the establishment of local preventive health projects or district-specific youth work, social problem locations can be reduced, meaning that savings can be made in the area of

mandatory tasks. In times of strained budgets, it is often the voluntary tasks of local government that are cancelled or placed at risk.

Local services of general interest should therefore enable every individual person to use their abilities and possibilities in such a way as to allow them to live a good life in which they can take personal responsibility for themselves within the context of a social community. It is increasingly the case that measures being taken to maintain the infrastructure and to guarantee services of general interest are being implemented in collaboration with civil society stakeholders. Citizens are becoming more involved in the running of their places of residence than they were just a few decades ago, for example in working to improve neighbourhood relations, or in the planning, design and running of community facilities such as swimming pools. This is leading to a reappraisal of the relationship between the state, municipalities, charities, companies and citizens. It is placing higher demands on cooperation, communication, coordination and management. To date, this kind of integrated development planning for towns, communities or districts, which is cross-sectoral, integrative and discursive, has not been standard practice.

4. Structural Differences and Challenges on a Local and Regional Level

4.1 Structural Characteristics of Regions

The Second Engagement Report seeks to assess regional differences in Germany on the basis of regional characteristics at the *Länder* level, in the planning regions (*Raumordnungsregionen*: RORs) and in the structural characteristics of towns and villages. This will enable a more pinpointed examination of the regional disparities that are characteristic of demographic change, and which affect communities in very different ways. The dynamics of demographic change will exacerbate the disparities between people's living standards in the coming decade, thereby driving home the practical consequences of regional gerontification and population decline for people's everyday lives.

Some of the most important resources and conditions at the regional level which play a significant role in the development and effectiveness of voluntary engagement are:
▎ **income situation** and the **risk of poverty**,
▎ **economic structure** and **employment**,
▎ **the dynamics of demographic trends**,
▎ **election turnout** and **political participation**, and the
▎ **quality of infrastructure for promoting voluntary engagement**.

It is primarily those regions along the external borders of Germany which are struggling with structural deficits which are the ones facing a broad gamut of challenges. The majority of these are eastern German regions, but structurally deprived areas in western Germany are also affected, in places where the economy is weaker or where the socio-economic situation of the population is more negative.

Regional variables can be an underlying factor in levels of engagement. These can include the political and institutional framework conditions, traditions of political participation and the culture of associations, together primarily with demographic, economic, social and cultural indicators. Besides the ubiquitously important individual human variables (age, sex, education, income, employment relationship, employment status, household composition, religious affiliation etc.) and other personal factors (milieu affiliation, social integration, values and attitudes), it is largely the regional variables that help to explain people's levels of (non-)participation in voluntary engagement. As a consequence, engagement policy is always bound in to structural policy measures.

Social cohesion represents a further important resource for community-based engagement. It is strongest in places where there are good social relations, high levels of trust in fellow members of the community and institutions, a sense of public good in the population, and a solid level of prosperity. These criteria are most commonly found in southern Germany, and contribute to higher levels of public involvement in voluntary engagement.

Nevertheless, the disparities and their causes set out above do not mean that the engagement profile of a region is fixed and unchangeable. Even in regions which currently have below-average levels of participation in voluntary engagement, there are large numbers of districts which are pursuing a number of promising approaches to encouraging voluntary participation.

4.1.1 Income Situation and the Risk of Poverty

One important condition for achieving a high level of engagement is prosperity, which on the one hand is associated with a person's income situation and on the other with the risk of poverty. With the exception of the Federal State of Bremen – which is ranked last in Germany – levels of poverty in the five new *Länder* measured on the basis of average income are significantly higher than in the western German *Länder*. This can be explained by the lower income levels in the new *Länder*. If one also factors in the differing price levels in the various regions, a new picture of poverty distribution in Germany emerges. In eastern Germany, the Federal State of Mecklenburg West-Pommerania as well as the cities of Berlin and Leipzig move up the list, and a number of western German regions are also affected (e.g. the Ruhr area and its cities). Whilst cities have high-income segments of population, there are also frequently population groups who experience a higher risk of income poverty and whose purchasing power is often weak.

One of the greatest dangers of falling into poverty is unemployment. This represents a serious problem in the Ruhr area, in a number of smaller regions and along the eastern German coast. The proportion of the population experiencing long-term unemployment is particularly high in the Ruhr area and in Bremen as well as in the rural regions of eastern Germany.

Since prosperity has a positive effect and high unemployment a negative effect on people's levels of involvement in voluntary engagement in the regions, these issues must be accorded serious attention in the development of strategic engagement policy.

4.1.2 Economic Structure and Employment

The question of **economic development potential** is closely linked to the **labour market situation**, because the dynamics of employment trends are predicated on a favourable blend of location factors: economic structure, infrastructure, purchasing power etc.

There are a number of structural deficits across large areas of the eastern German *Länder*, in the Ruhr area and on the western edge of the Rhineland, in the Saarland and in the coastal regions. This situation is exacerbated by peripheral geographical locations. The situation is markedly different in Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate, and also across large areas of Northrhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony. These *Länder* possess large numbers of regions which contain important manufacturing or service industries, a very good labour market situation and above-average levels of income.

It is clear that the eastern German regions are particularly susceptible to demographic change.

4.1.3 Demographic Dynamics

Demographic changes in Germany are taking place in a number of different ways from region to region. The few regions exhibiting good growth stand in contrast to a larger number of areas which are experiencing stagnation or decline. But there are also areas experiencing multiple developments and the parallel existence of growth and decline at the same time. The demographic evolution of the regions is largely the result of regional differences in birth and death rates, the way in which local trends in migration are tied in with national and international trends, and the age structure of the population. Changes in social structure – together with socio-structural factors (such as age, sex, social status) – exert a significant influence on the number of people involved in voluntary engagement together with the resources available for coping with social challenges.

4.1.4 Demographic Structures and Trends

The **population** of Germany will continue to decline marginally up to the year 2030. Whilst the demographics of the western German *Länder* will continue to be relatively stable, the eastern German regions will see a fall of almost 10 % in their population.

At the regional level, demographic change in the coming years will continue to take a variety of shapes. In the eastern German *Länder*, all of the regions outside the large conurbations are likely to see declines in population well above 10 % in some places. Declines in population in the western German *Länder* are more likely to be concentrated in the more thinly-populated rural districts and not fall much below approximately 3 %. In the western German *Länder*, the most favourable development with only limited changes to the population level is likely to be found in urban districts, and in the independent towns in the eastern German *Länder*.

The **ageing process** will accelerate in the years after 2025 and not reach its peak until the 2040s. The number of elderly people is set to increase by over 60 %. At the same time, the number of younger people is set to decline rapidly. As it stands, there are roughly 100 children per 25 elderly people; statistically speaking, in 2035 there will be 47 elderly people per 100 younger people. As a

result, there will also be a thinning out of social networks. The most dramatic changes in the numerical ratio between the generations will take place primarily in the eastern German *Länder*. Whilst these *Länder* will experience below average growth in the number of people requiring care, the potential number of carers is set to decline by almost a quarter. As in the past, it will be the smaller and more peripheral communities which experience the most dramatic declines in population, and there will be differences between the regions.

Additionally, the most important trends in the overall **labour supply** are also determined by the current and future age structure of society. The "baby boomer" generation will retire from the labour market in the next twenty years, and year groups with a lower birth rate will enter it. The labour market supply is therefore set to sink by around 10 % across Germany at a faster pace to 2020 and then rather less quickly thereafter. Once again, this decline will affect the eastern German *Länder* more profoundly than those in the west. By the end of 2035, roughly 83 % of all people in work will be living in the western German *Länder*. However, there are virtually no regions which are likely to see an increase in the number of younger workers under the age of 45.

Large cities and their immediate surrounding areas will increasingly become engines of growth. Nevertheless, many other cities and municipalities – including those in western Germany – will have to adjust to the fact that they will (continue to) shrink in size. With growth being concentrated in this manner, many communities outside the sphere of influence of the large population centres will lose any development prospects they might otherwise have had for the future.

4.1.5 Voter Turnout and Political Participation

A democratic society provides opportunities for voluntary engagement and ensures that citizens have the possibility to participate in its political life. Whereas over 90 % of eligible voters actually voted in the 1970s, the number has now sunk to around 70 %. Voter turnout in Federal elections now lies at between 50 % and 70 %, and in some local government elections even fails to reach 30 %. Similarly, the first election to the European Parliament in 1979 saw voter turnout of around 65 %, whereas it has now failed to breach the 50 % mark for a number of years.

Nevertheless, it is not the population as a whole that has withdrawn its participation. It is primarily those citizens who have a low income and a low level of education who no longer take part in elections. Furthermore, it is in the wealthier *Länder* that the people tend to vote, and in the poorer *Länder* in which voter turnout is declining.

Voter turnout at the constituency level shows the same kind of social disparities: the poorer the constituency and the higher the level of unemployment, the lower the level of voter turnout. The situation is very similar when it comes to non-institutionalised forms of participation beyond the scope of voting and being elected (such as petitions and demonstrations). Differences between people based on levels of education and income have been growing. People with better qualifications and higher income levels are to be found more often in these contexts. The most striking disparities are between the long-term unemployed or long-term poor, and those in continuous employment. People with a lower level of education represent their interests on the political stage ever more rarely. This explains why the *Länder* and regions with the highest numbers of long-term poor people show the lowest levels of political engagement.

Since the 1990s, people in all *Länder* have had the option at the local and regional level to initiate referenda (plebiscites and popular consultations). Participation levels in popular consultations depend mostly on the topic of discussion and the size of the community involved. Participation in the voting process is largest in those areas which contain a number of small municipalities, and is lowest in large urban areas.

4.1.6 Levels of Engagement in the Federal *Länder* and in Urban-Rural Regions

Studies show that Germany is seeing a fundamental increase in people becoming involved in voluntary engagement but with significant differences in the number of volunteers from *Land* to *Land* and between the regions. The statistics reveal an overall north-south divide, with lower levels of participation in the north (exception: Lower Saxony) and higher levels in the southern *Länder*. But there is also an east-west divide, with lower levels of participation in the eastern German *Länder*. However, participation levels are lower in the three city states than they are in most western (non city state) *Länder*. The reasons underlying these differences are generally rooted in social trends (e.g. the number of clubs and associations), different structural framework conditions, the availability of resources and the quality of infrastructure, all of which combine to support the various incentive and opportunity structures underlying voluntary engagement.

People in rural areas are more involved in engagement than those living in an urban environment. The urban-rural-disparity in engagement levels is partly explained by the greater significance of engagement for social integration and hence the greater need for it in rural areas, and the stiffer competition it faces from (commercial) recreational opportunities on offer in towns and cities.

Lower levels of participation in eastern Germany are due to the significantly higher unemployment rate, lower average incomes and the less promising socio-economic situation. But specific factors also have a negative effect, such as the weaker role of church and religion, a poor engagement infrastructure and associated lack of service structures, and the continuing decline in population levels in primarily rural regions of eastern Germany.

4.1.7 Organisations which Promote Engagement

Volunteer agencies, community foundations, local coordination offices, Multi-Generational Centres and other groups and organisations which promote engagement are distributed across the *Länder* and regions in very different ways, according to the 2015 Generali Engagement Atlas. This explains why it is impossible to establish a direct link between the existing infrastructure for promoting voluntary engagement and supporting the rates of participation at either the Federal, *Land* or municipal level.

What is noteworthy, however, is the parallel existence of various support structures, their local and regional concentration and the low number of institutions promoting engagement in thinly-populated rural regions. As a whole, there is certainly no real overall concept underlying a comprehensive strategy for promoting infrastructure development at either a Federal, *Land* or municipal level.

Indeed, the approaches which focus on social space – which are in widespread use – which also serve to promote engagement and social cohesion, were not included in the survey conducted for the *Engagement Atlas*. However, it is precisely these approaches which include people's specific needs on a local and smaller scale; it is they which can take account of manifold forms of engagement and identify those groups of people who are yet to find a point of access to participating in engagement.

The overall picture is – with a few notable exceptions – that strategies for promoting engagement, for the most part, lack coordination. Instead, they are often undertaken on the basis of departmental responsibility and pursued without any overall strategy.

4.2   The "Spatial Face" of Demographic Change

The consequences of social, economic, technological and demographic change result in different outcomes in the various spaces in which people live. These are apparent in the small-scale structures to be found in towns and in rural spaces. These various types of change might exacerbate existing negative situations, thereby leading to a downward spiral and, due to people relocating into and out of the region, to spatial divisions.

The paramount issues are different for towns and rural areas. But what both have in common is that engagement and civil society activities only exist in places where individuals or groups identify a problem or a need for action, and where there is enough scope for them to develop solutions. In this way, engagement can reinforce social cohesion, contribute to improving people's sense of identification with where they live, and encourage personal initiative. Existing structures can, in turn, exert a positive influence on people's willingness to become involved in voluntary engagement.

Participating in engagement is a good way of making connections and feeling at home in a new environment. Local associations and initiatives, kindergartens, schools, leisure centres etc. all offer numerous possibilities – for example for young families who have just moved into the area – to find a place in their new community and to establish social contacts. For this to happen, however, a good level of cooperation is necessary between official bodies and volunteers, as well as at the level of neighbourhood and village planning.

4.2.1 Engagement in Socio-Spatially Disadvantaged Urban Neighbourhoods
In urban regions – primarily in large cities – the connection between engagement and social cohesion is less pronounced, and the proportion of people engaged in voluntary work is significantly lower here than in rural regions. This is why urban development policy is increasingly focusing its attention on reinforcing social cohesion in people's neighbourhoods and their residential surroundings by implementing strategies and concepts which concentrate on people's social spaces and living environments. Steps need to be taken to counteract the tendencies which are leading to social and ethnic exclusion.

The concepts for neighbourhood development and neighbourhood management focus on the strengths of a given neighbourhood. The aim is to empower the residents to shape their lives independently and to improve their own life situations. Since the end of the 1990s, this approach – with its stress on self-empowerment and autonomous action – has been implemented in

disadvantaged and underdeveloped districts and areas as part of the urban planning process under the joint programme of the Federal Government and the Federal *Länder* entitled "The Social City – Investment in the Neighbourhood". The core challenge here lies in the question of how to ensure that the government interventions which are undertaken as part of this programme are turned into durable, long-term structures, and that the activation of personal initiative and engagement is sustained in these districts.

Empirical studies confirm the importance of voluntary engagement for the development of socio-spatially disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. At this level, engagement aims to ensure good levels of neighbourliness, to improve educational opportunities, and to involve and integrate people with a migrant background. Engagement at this level often takes place in the form of individual assistance and support. Overall, establishing network ties and collaboration with educational and engagement-promoting institutions – and binding these in to a city's overall political scheme – is central to increasing people's levels of engagement and improving their identification with the neighbourhood in which they live.

4.2.2 Engagement in Peripheral Rural Spaces

Demographic and economic issues in peripheral rural areas are exacerbated by the problem of selective migration out of the region. In addition, an increase in scepticism towards democracy has been observed, together with a susceptibility among some sections of the population to fall prey to extreme political viewpoints or groupings. In places where services have been severely curtailed, people's engagement and ability to organise themselves is naturally becoming ever more important. The smaller the town or village and the more thinly populated the region, the less well-served it is with commercial entertainment and cultural, leisure and sporting facilities, thereby rendering a sociable atmosphere, a sense of community and independently organised activities all the more important. It is important to have places for people to meet, and venues where shared activities can take place. These might include village community centres, Multi-Generational Centres or club rooms.

In these kinds of regions, engagement is not a "luxury". It carries a far more existential significance, and is a major locational factor in the sheer survival of such places. Despite this, the core element of engagement – the freedom to choose – is under threat. Studies show that the demographic stability of villages in structurally disadvantaged regions goes hand in hand with the existence of intact association structures, and that there is a clear connection between demographic developments and the concentration of associations. The greater the number of inhabitants involved in associations, the more stable the locality. The existence of attractive leisure activities is especially important for young people. Working for an association can increase the attractiveness of a locality as a place to live and indirectly as a place to do business, and it therefore functions as a core factor in the fight against migration out of the area.

Activities which are organised by the people themselves can – especially in small communities – make the crucial difference between local development and stagnation. It certainly seems likely that the only struggling villages able to stabilise themselves will be the ones in which dedicated inhabitants strive to make them attractive places to live. The decisive issue for the future survival of peripheral villages is, ultimately, whether they can find a way to cope with structural change and identify new, sustainable solutions for shaping the quality of their inhabitants' lives.

5. Promoting Engagement and Civil Society Developments in Key Areas/Policy Areas at a Local Level

The Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report seeks to highlight important **key areas of engagement**, which are closely linked to securing services of general interest at the local level:

Mobility is becoming increasingly important as a locational factor. Numerous services which are organised by voluntary engagement, such as citizens' buses and ridesharing marketplaces, frequently exist in tangent with public services. Integrated mobility management is particularly necessary in rural spaces, and the design of relevant governance processes will become one of the core tasks for the future to ensure the provision of services of general interest in these areas.

The area of **climate and energy** has also gained in importance with respect to people's levels of political participation and forms of cooperative organisation. This topic area is distinctive for its level of self-organisation, for example in people seeking alternative patterns of consumption or new ways of generating energy, by way of public debates and demonstrations against planned government construction projects or new forms of grass-roots participation – all of which are certainly the result of public protest.
The challenge for local engagement policy in this area lies in promoting innovative ideas and projects whilst at the same time advancing a dialogue-based approach within institutionalised forms of participation.

Civil protection has traditionally been the responsibility of honorary office holders. In this context, it is the volunteer fire services which are coming under increasing pressure. It is of the utmost importance that they increase their appeal to new target groups such as women, older age-groups and people with a migrant background if they are to continue fulfilling their municipal duties. At the same time, the individual emergency and rescue services are being forced to adapt and integrate new project-based forms of short-term engagement, and to better integrate their activities at the local level.

The fields of **health** as well as **care and support** are becoming increasingly important for demographic reasons and should be given greater consideration. Neither of these fields will be able to cope with the challenges of the future if they continue to pursue strategies which are based on professional service provision alone. New healthcare companies could act to coordinate self-help, self-organisation and professional providers, ideally in collaboration with health insurance companies and social insurance carriers. Policies governing the provision of care and support are also in need of considerable attention and correction in order to create a greater plurality of charitable services at a local level.

Cultural programmes are not among the primary mandatory responsibilities of services of general interest, but they are of course nevertheless important with respect to the sustainability and attractiveness of towns and regions. Cultural activities have long rested on a foundation of voluntary engagement, the active cultural energy of local people, forms of patronage and public funding. Nevertheless, local stakeholders could adopt a more broad-based approach to fully exploiting the potential benefits of supporting cultural activities in order to improve the integration of various disadvantaged target groups.

Sport is currently gaining in importance, especially as a way of integrating population groups which are barred in some way from benefiting from voluntary engagement, for people seeking refuge in Germany, and as a way of preventing the onset of ill health. Because sport as a cross-sectional topic affects a host of areas which fall under community development, an integrated sports development plan might serve to strengthen the role of sports clubs. Their potential as stakeholders in intersectoral community networks has yet to be fully exploited. This still untapped potential presents a number of opportunities for sports clubs themselves and for the promotion of voluntary engagement as a whole.
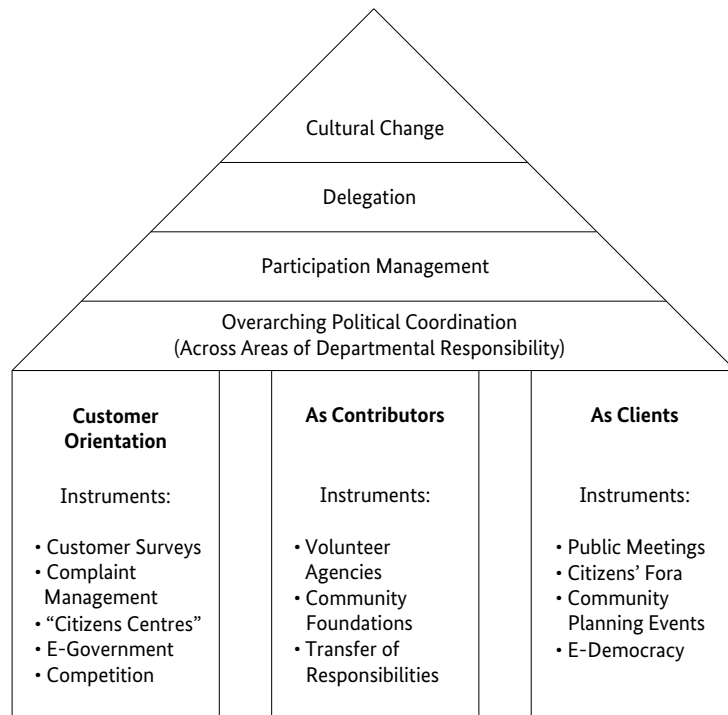
6. Local Governance, Engagement and the "Citizens' Municipality" ("Bürgerkommune")

The term "local governance" understands political decision-making and administration as a process in which stakeholders are bound in to the economy and (civil) society. **Cooperative forms of political and administrative procedure (Good Governance)** are particularly important at the municipal and local level. Due to the existence of complex mutual dependencies, negotiation processes are becoming increasingly important for coping with the challenges now arising in society. This is why more intensive public dialogue between politicians, administrators and the general public, as well as allowing the public to have a say in how their communities are run, is becoming ever more important. New institutional infrastructures and associated support programmes are an expression of this tendency. Networking, cooperation and communication are becoming increasingly necessary, and are therefore also becoming an integral part of engagement policy.

The **model of the "citizens' municipality"** is an expression of this new culture of civic participation and cooperation. In these citizens' municipalities, the needs of the citizens constitute the central focus of attention. Citizens are entitled to have a say in working out the aims of local policy-making and in participating in bringing local projects to fruition. In these municipalities, citizens value engagement and participation very highly.

The principle of the citizens' municipality is best depicted as a "house" (Figure 4). Within this house, citizens take on a variety of roles: In the context of *customer orientation*, community administrators receive feedback or local services can be requested or called upon. In its role of *helping to shape the local community*, the public actually has a say and can therefore de facto issue administrators with mandates for action. To enable all this to happen, there needs to be *overarching political coordination across areas of departmental responsibility*, there needs to be a structure in place for *managing participation*, and finally a transfer of responsibilities (*delegation*) and a *change of culture* within the municipal administration. Broadly speaking, at the current time the principles of local governance and citizens' municipalities have failed to take root in Germany. In the years to come, it is expected that better quality empirical and comparative research findings will assist in promoting these concepts.

Figure 4: The Model of the "Citizens' Municipality" ("Bürgerkommune")

Cultural Change

Delegation

Participation Management

Overarching Political Coordination
(Across Areas of Departmental Responsibility)

Customer Orientation

Instruments:

• Customer Surveys
• Complaint Management
• "Citizens Centres"
• E-Government
• Competition

As Contributors

Instruments:

• Volunteer Agencies
• Community Foundations
• Transfer of Responsibilities

As Clients

Instruments:

• Public Meetings
• Citizens' Fora
• Community Planning Events
• E-Democracy

Source: Bogumil et al. 2003: 26.

IV.
Findings and Recommendations

The following section sets out a selection of the core findings and recommendations contained in the Second Engagement Report.

Acknowledging the Diversity of Engagement in a Civil Society

Acknowledging the diversity of engagement is crucial for stimulating fruitful public debate. The Commission has therefore decided to adopt a relatively broad definition of engagement in order to ensure that key aspects of engagement are not overlooked. This is necessary because a strong focus on types of engagement with a high public profile runs the risk of failing to acknowledge the "quieter" forms of engagement which exist in neighbourhoods and migrant communities, for example, which are often not identified as voluntary engagement even by the people involved in them. The Commission recommends that the prevailing understanding of engagement be reviewed, and that a multi-layered policy of engagement be initiated which places greater value on engagement in cases where "tensions" intersect, such as between volunteer work *and* codetermination, informal *and* organised engagement, sociability *and* functionality, etc. However, the primary intention is not to target and promote specific forms of voluntary engagement, but in the first instance to address questions related to the demarcation and protection of essential freedoms and prerequisites for engagement, which also encompass structural conditions at the regional level.

The Need for an Empiricism of Diverse Engagement

▌ Empirical research on engagement as well as the analysis of relevant studies should be devoted in greater measure to methodological considerations, types of indicators used, data compilation methods and also the representative nature of surveys.

▌ Research should also be conducted into the national variants and traditions of engagement. In order to achieve a more targeted local engagement policy, it is necessary to be in possession of relevant planning data and reliable information at the regional and local level.

▌ Too little is known about the financial dimension of promoting engagement. The scale, focal points and effects of funding engagement require further research. Of particular interest is the effect of tax credits related to the *Übungsleiterpauschale* and the so-called *Ehrenamtspauschale* (a personal tax allowance related to particular types of honorary work), also in lieu of data held by the tax authorities.

Understanding and Shaping Demographic Change as Social Change

▌ It is primarily communities in rural-peripheral areas which require – with a view to mentalities, social structures and infrastructures for the promotion of engagement – a family-friendly, multi-generational agenda which in turn needs the support of civil society, politics and the economy.

- Despite and precisely because of their difficult financial circumstances, municipalities must forge ahead with the promotion of engagement and be open to new ideas and forms of action in order to offset infrastructure bottlenecks and shortfalls in services. In order to achieve this, an intelligent approach to political support at the Federal and *Länder* levels is required within the parameters of cooperative federalism.
- Urban areas with complex social challenges require approaches specific to individual neighbourhoods and social spaces, as well as integrated planning concepts at the district level for promoting engagement and social cohesion. The classic institution-based, infrastructure-centred promotion of engagement which lacks any relevance to social space tends largely to only benefit better-educated sections of the population.

Conflict and Concord: Coping with the Challenges of Engagement for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Cooperatively

The integration of refugees who are destined to remain in Germany for the long term is a humanitarian task which must be borne by the whole of society. It can only be managed by the various levels of government at the Federal, *Länder* and municipal level working in collaboration with companies, civil society organisations, charities and the virtually endless number of ways in which ordinary citizens contribute to voluntary engagement. However, appropriate methods need to be found to deal with controversies arising among the citizens. A readiness to talk is vital, and people should not lose sight of the principles governing the rule of law.
It is of fundamental importance for the integration of refugees as well as their encounters with local residents that they be included in the various forms of voluntary engagement.

Engagement by People with a Migrant Background: A Nuanced Approach to Acknowledging and Appreciating their Work

The full gamut of ways in which people with a migrant background are involved in engagement needs to be acknowledged and appreciated to a greater degree than has previously been the case. The government should give targeted support to these types of engagement which are distinctive for aspects such as integration and support and which are actively involved in the social environment in which they exist. Greater support should also be provided to collaborative engagement between people with and without a migrant background. More attention should be paid to the question of how existing static structures for the integration of people with a migrant background can be changed and made more flexible.

The Monetarisation of Voluntary Engagement: The Need for Clarification

The traditions and trends underlying forms of monetarisation for voluntary engagement necessitate the setting up of a system which provides for the transparent handling of money and non-cash benefits in the funding of engagement. This takes on a further relevance with respect to the introduction of the minimum wage and questions of labour leasing (*Arbeitnehmerüberlassung*). Current levels of knowledge regarding forms of monetarisation are unsatisfactory. There is an urgent need for improvement in the quality of data on the scope and impact of monetarisation on people's daily lives, on regions and on fields of engagement. This is also true in the case of the *Übungsleiterpauschale*.

Education for and through Engagement

Education is a key factor in engagement. In order to strengthen engagement in the education sector, schools should become cooperative institutions. In many places they are on their way to

outgrowing their traditional function as public institutions and increasingly becoming fora for community building. This, however, requires schools to be given greater leeway in the way they run themselves, and they need to achieve greater "internal" openness – by giving a greater say and more responsibility to their students – and greater "external" openness through partnerships with associations, social organisations or district initiatives.

Education *for* and *through* engagement should be accorded greater importance in the public and professional discussion regarding education.

Participation and Engagement: Two Fields with Several Points of Contact

Political participation and voluntary engagement have several points of contact. When effective and transparent opportunities for participation which contribute to people's political will and decision-making are made available, then this exerts a positive influence on the field of voluntary engagement. Forms of political participation which involve commitment should therefore be encouraged, in order to promote engagement across large sections of the population and to (further) anchor political participation firmly among the people.

Dialogue-based opportunities for participation with a bridge-building character also serve to counteract polarising forces between people and groups as well as to prevent social exclusion whilst at the same time building up social capital.

Services of General Interest and Engagement: Enabling People to Shape their own Lives

The various forms and types of services of general interest at the state and municipal level should pursue the aim of enabling all members of society to live a good life, to shape their own lives and to have a say in their communities. To accomplish their task of coproducing services of general interest (management, networking, facilitation), the municipalities need to be given more expertise, backing, advice and an adequate legal, financial and institutional framework within which to work.

The municipalities' financial leeway should be expanded by a programme which secures services of general interest in structurally weak regions and which is paid for jointly by Federal, *Länder* and municipal funding. In doing so, the importance of the contribution made by voluntary engagement in securing services of general interest at the municipal level should be given due consideration, albeit without undermining the mandatory work undertaken by services of general interest themselves. Above all, district-based and/or local and integrative support programmes (urban and rural development) should have a greater focus on securing and managing services of general interest, and promoting engagement as a factor which results in a better quality of life.

Social Enterprises and Cooperatives: Engagement and Profitability

With a view to the economic significance of engagement, both traditional and novel forms of non-profit business practices should be taken into consideration in engagement policy and funding, including those in which social, ecological and economic targets are aligned with forms of engagement which are rooted in solidarity and the community. Here, it is necessary to further open up the institutional environment and legal frameworks to innovative approaches. It is recommended that legislators at the Federal and *Länder* levels support and formalise the development, backing and promotion of self-organised structures of non-profit business practices and socio-entrepreneurial initiatives as a function of the municipal authorities.

Promoting Engagement: New Forms of Government and Administration

❚ Local engagement policies for promoting, accessing and acknowledging engagement should be combined with a new local culture of governance and administration. Not least because of the refugee situation, municipal politics is being confronted with the challenge of finding new practices for managing the engagement of its citizens, and of shifting engagement from the periphery to the core of political decision-making processes and local services of general interest.

❚ What is needed is a new sense of shared responsibility between citizens, politicians, administrators and stakeholders in the business sector. It is therefore essential to link voluntary engagement to forms of cooperative political decision-making, and to tie it in to a set of engagement-based responsibilities which can be provided by services of general interest.

Engagement and Ensuring Mobility: Working Towards Intelligent Systems

Especially in rural regions with poor infrastructure conditions, mobility services (co-)organised by ordinary citizens are becoming the cornerstone of a mobility policy which is tailored to the needs of local people. To enable this to continue, legal, financial and organisational impediments must be reduced at the Federal and *Länder* levels.

Coordination and collaboration between the rural districts, the franchise operators, commercial public transport providers and civil society groups should be exploited to the full, and supported and managed in a targeted way. Municipal authorities must integrate their mobility management. In doing so, the potential offered by new information and communication technologies should be exploited systematically.

Climate and Energy Policy: Working Together with Local People

Cities and municipalities need to develop plans within the framework of climate and energy policy which envisage informing and involving new stakeholders and local citizens in addition to collaborating with established organisations. It is only by doing this that perspectives for key areas such as transport, local energy provision and the refurbishment of buildings can be ascertained, and for medium-term goals to be identified as "milestones". The engagement of the local people is required here, both in the planning and conception stages as well as in production and consumption, as is the case in energy cooperatives, for example.

Civil Protection: New Partnerships and the Capacity for Innovation

The civil protection, fire and rescue services are all under pressure to adapt to new and regionally varying framework conditions at both an organisational and local level. These services need to open themselves up to new target groups, examine the culture of their organisations, cooperate more with other aid organisations and improve their networking at a local and regional level.

In addition, it will become necessary in the future to involve the population more in developing concepts for civil protection, help them to deal with disaster situations appropriately, increase people's awareness of dangerous situations and enhance their ability to help themselves.

Engagement and Self Help: An Indispensible Part of the Healthcare System

Engagement, participation and self-help are part and parcel of regional and local healthcare policy. Greater energy needs to be invested in acknowledging the role they play and integrating them into a coherent prevention policy. In addition, the municipal authorities need to be given reliable support in their efforts to safeguard local healthcare and the infrastructure necessary to provide it. Healthcare conferences under the aegis of municipal authorities play an important coordinating role in healthcare-related engagement and in the safeguarding of an infrastructure which meets the required demands, something which should be laid down in the Federal statutory regulations and anchored in state law on the public health service (ÖGdG – Öffentliches Gesundheitsdienstgesetz).

Nursing and Care Work: Increasing Local Responsibility

The role and expertise of the municipalities also needs to be enhanced in the field of care work. Only the towns and local communities are in a position to systematically combine professional help with other forms of voluntary engagement such as neighbourhood support. This requires local cultures and structures of care to be fostered, as they play a central role here.

Welfare pluralism – consisting of a modern blend of responsibility and support – requires expertise and resources at the local government level. The benefits regulation system for care insurance, and the process for assessing the quality of care provision must therefore be related more closely to the support provided by family members, neighbours and members of the community.

Local Cultural Policy: Making Use of Creative Resources Locally

The future viability of many municipalities depends in no small measure on their degree of cultural vitality. In the fields of culture and cultural policy, those people who are engaged locally should receive the greatest support. This is true not only in the context of maintaining cultural traditions, but also with respect to people's creativity and openness to new forms of cultural activities and programmes. In urban contexts, cultural policy and the promotion of engagement should be closely linked to local models governing urban life and development which set the tone for a culture of diversity, creativity, a sense of openness to new experiences and the fostering of a local identity.

Identifying, Promoting and Utilising the Potential of Sports Clubs

Sports clubs play a central role in shaping the landscape of engagement. The Federal Government and the *Länder* should examine the degree to which the legal frameworks covering engagement within sports clubs can be further simplified and identify areas where red tape can be eliminated. Municipal business premises or coordination centres can be used to relieve the burden on sports clubs. In addition, sports policy should be made into a cross-sectional aspect of local government and administration. This would have a positive effect on urban development, on facilities for promoting a healthy lifestyle, on schools and on local integration policy. Furthermore, municipalities should promote the various social and public service functions of local sports clubs, and establish links between them and other social stakeholders and agencies.

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Sources for Tables and Diagrams

Figure 1:

Eigenberechnung der Sachverständigenkommission für den Zweiten Engagementbericht – Demografischer Wandel und bürgerschaftliches Engagement: Der Beitrag des Engagements zur lokalen Entwicklung. Berlin 2016.

[Calculation by the Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report – Demographic Change and Civic Engagement: Civic Engagement and its Contribution to Local Development. Berlin 2016.]

Figure 2:

Eigenberechnung der Sachverständigenkommission für den Zweiten Engagementbericht – Demografischer Wandel und bürgerschaftliches Engagement: Der Beitrag des Engagements zur lokalen Entwicklung. Berlin 2016.

[Calculation by the Expert Commission for the Second Engagement Report – Demographic Change and Civic Engagement: Civic Engagement and its Contribution to Local Development. Berlin 2016.]

Figure 3:

Simonson, Julia; Vogel, Claudia; Tesch-Römer, Clemens (Hg.) (2016): Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland – Der Deutsche Freiwilligensurvey 2014. Endbericht. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (DZA). Berlin.

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Figure 4:

Bogumil, Jörg; Holtkamp, Lars; Schwarz, Gudrun (2003): Das Reformmodell Bürgerkommune. Leistungen – Grenzen – Perspektiven. Berlin: Sigma.

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Tables 1 to 4:

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[Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research (ed.) (2013): Motives for Civic Engagement. Results of a Representative Population Survey. A Study on Behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). Allensbach.]