



# OMNIBUS

gemeinnützige GmbH für Direkte Demokratie

# Stops Along the Road to Direct Democracy

The OMNIBUS FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY is a citizens' initiative dedicated to the introduction of popular referendums on all levels of government.

The most important inspiration for our work is the artist Joseph Beuys, who founded the "Organization for Direct Democracy through Referendum" in 1971 with an office in Düsseldorf. In 1972 he installed the office at "documenta 5" in Kassel and discussed his "expanded concept of art" and "direct democracy" with visitors for 100 days.

1987



One and a half years after the death of Joseph Beuys, the first OMNIBUS FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY begins at "documenta 8" (1987). It stays on the road for seven years (737 stops).

1988 - 1990



On 24 February 1988 we attempt to cross the border into East Berlin (Action West /East), but are stopped. Only after the end of the GDR regime (1990) are we able to travel to East Germany and support the New Forum and the "Round Tables".

1987 - 1992



We promote the introduction of local and state referendums in seven federal states. Today, this is regulated by law in all states. Hundreds of local referendums take place every year. In this way, direct democracy is growing from the grassroots.

1987 - 1992



On the occasion of "reunification" and the constitutional promise in the preamble to the German constitution (Grundgesetz), on 17 June 1992 we fill a column outside the Bundestag in Bonn with 1,074,239 signatures in favour of introducing referendums on the federal level.

1993 - 1995



In 1993 we co-initiate the referendum "More Democracy in Bavaria". In just 14 days, 1,196,000 citizens sign to put it to a vote! The 1995 referendum is successful. The people themselves introduce a practicable mode of carrying out referendums in municipalities and cities.

1996 - 2000



We support the popular initiative "Freedom for Schools" (Schule in Freiheit) in Schleswig-Holstein and the referendum for independent judges in Bavaria. In Munich, we initiate the referendum on citizen participation and transparency in municipal finances.

2001



In April 2001, the blue OMNIBUS parks at Schloß Freudenberg as a station in the "Field of Experience for the Senses and Mind" (Erfahrungsfeld der Sinne und des Denkens). The OMNIBUS serves as a depository for 1,074,239 signatures in favour of federal referendums. Seven bee colonies live in the bus and produce honey.

2000



In October 2000, the second OMNIBUS embarks on its journey, and helps the referendum "More Democracy in Thuringia" to victory. A total of 363,123 citizens (18.3 % of the electorate! demand the lowering of the barriers to state-wide referendums.

2001



On 3 May 2001, the white OMNIBUS is visible in the sky over Berlin! With this action, the OMNIBUS, together with the organization "More Democracy" (Mehr Demokratie e.V.) begins collecting signatures for a referendum to establish federal referendums (Referendum on the Referendum).

Since 2001



... the OMNIBUS has been on the road continuously from early March to late November throughout Germany. We visit more than 100 towns annually. Wherever the OMNIBUS stops it opens up a space to discuss the idea it embodies.

2002



In the summer of 2002, our experience with the 17-year-old Jana Li Frank leads us to the idea of offering internships for school pupils in the OMNIBUS. Since then, more than 20 pupils have taken advantage of this opportunity, greatly enriching our work in the process.

2003



On 13 March 2003, in a public action outside the Bundestag together with "Mehr Demokratie e.V.", we present the representatives of all political parties and the vice president of the Bundestag with 100,000 signatures (according to our parliamentary bill, this would be the referendum).

2003



In May 2003, the OMNIBUS crosses the Alps to help an allied initiative in South Tyrol to collect signatures for an improvement in the legislation regarding referendums in their provincial constitution.

2002 - 2004



In June 2004, the citizens of the city-state of Hamburg vote by referendum to provide themselves with the most modern electoral law of all of Germany's federal states! For the first time, the voters decide how elections are to be conducted! The OMNIBUS is a co-initiator of this referendum and participates actively in Hamburg at all stages of the process.

2006



In April 2006 we start the "Referendum Action", which gives everyone the opportunity to become active immediately on behalf of legislation providing for referendums on the federal level. Some 50,000 action cards are already in circulation. The action is being run from our Berlin office ([www.aktion-volksabstimmung.de](http://www.aktion-volksabstimmung.de)).

2006



In October 2006, the federal city-state of Bremen is so successful with their popular initiative for electoral reform on the Hamburg model that the political parties adopt the initiative's proposed parliamentary bill without a referendum.

...etc.



Brigitte Krenkers,  
Associate and  
Initiator of the first  
OMNIBUS,  
Kempten / Allgäu



Johannes Stüttgen,  
Associate and  
Co-founder of  
OMNIBUS GmbH,  
Düsseldorf



Michael von der Lohe,  
Executive Secretary,  
Hattingen



Kurt Wilhelm,  
Responsible for the  
Referendum Action,  
Head of the Berlin  
office



Werner Küppers,  
OMNIBUS driver,  
peripatetic,  
(lives and works on  
the OMNIBUS)

**omnibus** = (lat.) for all, by all, with all

Our work is directed at EVERYBODY, since the idea of democracy is EVERYBODY'S business. We want to create instruments that all of us can use to take responsibility for shaping our polity at every level.

We have no lobby. We receive no funding from the government or business. We can only continue our work because we are building a sponsors' association, with some 3,000 members at the moment, who believe that this work is meaningful and important and support it financially. You, too, can get on the OMNIBUS right away by contributing whatever you can afford. We understand this as a concrete form of participation without which we cannot attain our common aims.

[www.omnibus.org](http://www.omnibus.org)

OMNIBUS GmbH für Direkte Demokratie • Öschstr. 24 • 87 437 Kempten • Tel. 0831 - 57 07 689 • Fax 0831 - 58 59 202 • email: [info@omnibus.org](mailto:info@omnibus.org) • [www.omnibus.org](http://www.omnibus.org)  
OMNIBUS GmbH • Greifswalder Straße 4 • 10 405 Berlin • Tel. 030 - 42 80 43 90 • Fax 030 - 42 80 21 90 • email: [berlin@omnibus.org](mailto:berlin@omnibus.org) • [www.aktion-volksabstimmung.de](http://www.aktion-volksabstimmung.de)  
GLS Bank BLZ 430 609 67 Kto 800 673 00 • Bank f. Sozialwirtschaft BLZ 700 205 00 Kto 8843 000 • Geschäftsführer: Michael von der Lohe • HRB 23167 Düsseldorf