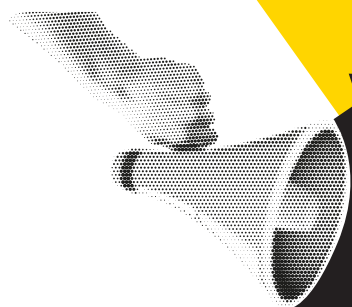




EXPERIENCING DEMO CRACY

**YOUR VOICE.
YOUR VOTE.
YOUR FUTURE...**

UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

ENGLISH VERSION

We work for
tomorrow



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UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

‘EXPERIENCING DEMOCRACY. YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE. YOUR FUTURE...’

The temporary exhibition, which is organised by the University Museums of the University of Graz, addresses the topic of democracy. It focuses on the basic principles of democratically organised societies and nations, highlighting the role and responsibility of citizens in terms of democratic processes.

The exhibition assumes democracy to be the highest aim of the form of society and government, one expressed through the principles of republicanism, federalism and the rule of law.

Furthermore, its goal is to provide visitors with individual insights and experiences regarding opinion-forming processes, co-determination rights and electoral systems. In this context, the University Museums are intended as a space to hold engaging discussions on central topics of the present day.

THUS, THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ARISES:

HOW DO YOU ENGAGE? – JOIN THE DISCUSSION AND SHAPE YOUR FUTURE!

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'EXPERIENCING DEMOCRACY. YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE. YOUR FUTURE...'

The current temporary exhibition 'Experiencing democracy. Your voice. Your vote. Your future...' invites you to look critically at the history of democracy and its representation in today's world.

It provides insights into the beginnings of democracy's conceptualization in ancient Greece, as well as its revival in early modern times and its further development until today.

It addresses the following question:

HOW DO YOU ENGAGE?

The **EXHIBITION** lets you explore:

- the birth of democracy in antiquity: Greece and Rome
- your bubble
- your individual echo-chamber
- your freedom of opinion and speech
- your protest culture
- media freedom
- the concept of democracy: antiquity to the present day
- elections and voting rights
- the democracy-library
- democracy and sustainability
- the question: What do you stand for?

ANCIENT DEMOCRACY

In the context of Europe, the **IDEA OF DEMOCRACY** – the power (*krátos*) of the people (*démōs*) – dates back to ancient Greece in the 5th century BC. In this revolutionary system of civic self-government, free male Athenians exercised legislative, executive, supervisory and judicial power.

THE ATHENIAN CONSTITUTION

The Athenian constitution continues to shape our understanding of democracy to the present day. It was a direct democratic constitution based on the principle of popular sovereignty.

Its origins lie in the reforms of Cleisthenes (Greek politician and statesman, 570 – sometime after 507 BC) in 508 BC, and its completion can be found in the so-called radical democracy, which was enforced under the aegis of the demagogue **PERICLES** (Greek statesman, circa 490 – 429 BC) around 450 BC.

The citizens formed the legislative branch through the **POPULAR ASSEMBLY** (*ekklesia*), the judicial branch through the *dikasteria* and the executive branch through the exercise of offices.

However, **ATHENIAN CITIZENSHIP** was exclusive, being only granted to non-Athenian citizens in exceptional cases. Officials were either elected or chosen by lot, depending on their area of responsibility. Women, slaves and metics (foreigners living in Athens) were excluded from political participation.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

(RES PUBLICA)

The model of democratic structures was also introduced in ancient Rome, although the **ROMAN REPUBLIC** was more likely an oligarchy (a reign by nobility).

The Roman Republic, beginning in 509 BC, had a largely unwritten constitution and was shaped by the **MOS MAIORUM** (code of conduct and norms).

According to the ancient writer **POLYBIUS** (200 – 120 BC) and the Roman philosopher, orator and politician **CICERO** (106 – 43 BC), the Roman constitution represented an optimal mixture.

It consisted of:

- a **MONARCHICAL ELEMENT**: two consuls – a quasi-remnant of the royal era
- an **ARISTOCRATIC ELEMENT**: the Senate
- a **DEMOCRATIC ELEMENT**: the popular assembly

The following principles applied to **MAGISTRATES** (i.e. the highest elected officials): **COLLEGIALITY** (office held by at least two people at the same time), **ANNUITY** (magistrates could only hold office for a maximum of one year) and **PROHIBITION OF ITERATION** (no multiple, directly consecutive exercise of an office).

The foundations of modern democratic states, which were finally laid in the 18th century, can be traced back primarily to republican thinking and the Roman Republic model, which was based on the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.

PLASTER CAST OF A GREEK STATUETTE, KNOWN AS THE 'VARVAKION ATHENA'



A smaller replica of the gold and ivory statue of Athena Parthenos made of marble (from Roman times), Athens, National Museum.

This replica was found in 1880 during excavations of a Roman villa near the Varvakeion School.

The work provides insights into the original, which was located on the Acropolis in Athens, created shortly after the middle of the 5th century BC by the famous Athenian sculptor Phidias and located in the Parthenon temple. The statue is thus part of the Pericles' building programme from the so-called 'radical democracy' period.

She wears a peplos (a dress reaching down to the ankles) and a helmet with a sphinx and two depictions of Pegasus. Her outstretched right arm rests on a column, and on her hand stands the Greek goddess of victory, Nike. Athena is depicted

with an aegis (a protective shield with a Gorgon's head – a representation of Medusa's severed head), a helmet and a shield based on Erichthonios, the castle snake that guarded the Acropolis. She represents the prosperity and stability of the city of Athens.

Department for Antiquity, University of Graz

The **PNYX** was a place of popular assemblies, held since the time of Cleisthenes. Great orators such as Pericles gave their speeches here, making the Pnyx a symbol of Athenian democracy.

View across the Pnyx to the Acropolis, with the speaker's platform at the bottom right of the picture.

PLASTER CAST OF A DOUBLE HERM OF THE GREEK AUTHORS HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES (5TH CENTURY BC)

The Greek historiographer **HERODOTUS** of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor (c. 490 – 420 BC) is considered the 'father of history'. His work, entitled 'Histories', recounts the Persian Wars that took place between 490 and 479 BC. Herodotus was a great advocate of democracy, especially Athenian democracy.

The Greek historian **THUCYDIDES** of Athens (c. 460 – 398 BC) was a politician, author and military man. He served as a general in the conflict described in his work 'The Peloponnesian War'. His writing on the Peloponnesian War, which took place between 431 and 404 BC and in which Thucydides recounts the events up to the winter of 411 BC, is intended to be understood as an objective war report.

Roman marble work based on originals from the 4th century BC (Museo Nazionale, Naples).

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PLASTER CAST OF THE BUST OF PERICLES, ROMAN COPY OF A GREEK ORIGINAL (VATICAN MUSEUMS, MUSEO PIO CLEMENTINO)

The Athenian statesman, military commander and renowned demagogue **PERICLES** (c. 490 – 429 BC), together with his party colleague Ephialtes, installed a 'radical' democracy.

Under him, various laws were enacted that both limited the influence of the aristocrats and gave the people more state power. However, his motives were far from altruistic, as these measures earned him and his noble family great prestige among the demos.

He died as probably the most prominent victim of the so-called 'Attic Plague' in the first phase of the Peloponnesian War (431 – 404 BC).

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MODEL OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CLASSICAL GREEK TEMPLE, SUCH AS THE PARTHENON

The **PARTHENON** was dedicated to the city goddess Athena and was built between 447 and 438 BC from Pentelic marble (a type of Attic marble that comes from the area of today's Penteli Mountains in Greece).

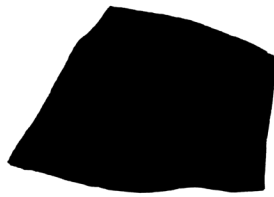
The name originates from the room of the building that shares its name. The cella (the main room of a Greek temple) housed a colossal statue of Athena made of gold and ivory – a work by the sculptor Phidias (500/490 – 430/420 BC).

The temple also served as the treasury of the Attic-Delian League – an alliance between Athens and the cities of Asia Minor. It was also the prestige project of Pericles' building programme, which guaranteed the Athenian people a secure livelihood for many years, and is the stone embodiment of the hegemonic power of Athens and its citizenship.

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VESSEL FRAGMENT WITH INCISED INSCRIPTION 'THIRROS / BIRROS'

(ATTIC, CLASSICAL PERIOD)



Ostraka are fragments of ceramic vessels that were used as secondary writing material in democratic voting procedures.

The name of an Athenian citizen who was to be exiled was carved onto a **CLAY SHARD** (ostrakon). The ostraka were thus used as ballot papers. The person who received the most votes had to leave Athens and go into

exile for 10 years, although their assets were not confiscated by the community.

This procedure, which was probably introduced in Athens at the beginning of the 5th century BC, is called ostracism. The purpose of ostracism was to prevent tyranny, but it was often used as a means of getting rid of unpopular political opponents, as their long absence usually meant the end of their political career.

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MODEL OF THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS

The naval battle of Salamis took place near Athens in September 480 BC. The allied Greeks – led by the Athenians and Spartans under their commanders Themistocles and Eurybiades, respectively – fought against the Persian army under their great king, Xerxes I. In this decisive naval battle, from which the Greeks emerged victorious, the Persians were driven out of Greek waters, significantly delaying the attack on land. Just one year later, in 479 BC, the united Greeks finally defeated their enemies on Greek soil during the Battle of Plataea (Boeotia), thereby forever banishing the danger of Hellenic democracy being lost to the influence of a 'barbarian culture'.

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MODEL OF THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

The Battle of Thermopylae took place in 480 BC on the Gulf of Malia (Central Greece) and was part of the so-called **PERSIAN WARS**. In this conflict, the League of the United Hellenes faced off against the Persians, led by their great king, Xerxes I. The location is a strategically important narrow pass, which the Greeks had to secure at all costs. Faced with superior enemy forces – estimated at over 200,000 – the united Hellenes were ultimately defeated. A small contingent of only 300 Lacedaemonians and approximately 700 allied Thespians and Thebans, under the supreme command of the Spartan king Leonidas, held out to ensure the safe retreat of the Greeks. This battle is the main reason for the image handed down in ancient sources of the brave Spartans unwilling to retreat from their enemies.

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YOUR BUBBLE

Currently, the **INTERNET** significantly changes democratic processes in everyday life. Social media and digital search engine algorithms respond to users' personal preferences, which means they primarily provide users with personalised content.

However, this means that a lot of information that does not correspond to one's own views is hidden.

Individuals (groups) and networks act as **FILTER BUBBLES** in which certain opinions and ideas are represented.

QUOTES TANGLING FROM THE FILTER BUBBLES

- Democracy presupposes rationality in the people's minds, which it is supposed to bring forth. (Karl Jaspers)
- Democracy is a process that guarantees we are not governed better than we deserve. (George Bernard Shaw)
- Elections alone do not form democracy. (Barack Obama)
- Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others. (Winston Churchill)
- Democracy: government of the people, by the people, for the people. (Abraham Lincoln)
- You rejoice in the power of the press – do you never fear its tyranny? (Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach)
- Those who give up freedom to gain security will end up losing both. (Benjamin Franklin)

YOUR ECHO CHAMBER

Similar to a **'FILTER BUBBLE'**, an **'ECHO CHAMBER'** refers to the phenomenon of primarily surrounding oneself with like-minded people, thereby confirming and reinforcing one's own opinions while largely excluding opposing views.

Echo chambers arise not only in social environments but also frequently in the **DIGITAL WORLD**. One's own opinion becomes an echo there, reinforced by like-minded people as in an echo chamber.

'TODAY, THE GREAT PROMISE OF EMANCIPATION IS DROWNED OUT BY THE WILD NOISES IN FRAGMENTED, SELF-CIRCLING ECHO CHAMBERS.'

Jürgen Habermas: Überlegungen und Hypothesen zu einem erneuten Strukturwandel der politischen Öffentlichkeit, in: Martin Seeliger/Sebastian Seignani (Hg.): Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit? Sonderband Leviathan 37/2021, Nomos, Baden-Baden 2021.

GAME INSTRUCTIONS

Have you ever thought about what happens when you end up in your echo chamber? Try it here!

You see 25 different symbols in front of you. Start with this symbol: 

When you turn it around, you will find a question with two possible answers: each answer shows a symbol.

Select one of the two answers and find the corresponding symbol you have chosen from the echo-chamber box and turn it around.

There you will find another question with two answers. Your chosen answer shows the symbol, which you will then look for in the echo-chamber box and also turn around.

If you choose a symbol with no question on the backside, then you have ended up in your very own echo chamber.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND PROTEST CULTURE

In addition to the **CORNERSTONES OF DEMOCRACY**, such as

- universal, secret, free and equal **ELECTIONS**
- the guarantee of **FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS** (in particular, personal freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, etc.)
- **MINORITY RIGHTS** and **HUMAN RIGHTS**
- **SEPARATION OF POWERS** and **OPPOSITION**

living democracy also means actively exercising one's right to criticise and protest.

Political participation goes beyond voting and includes both institutional and non-institutional forms of participation.

INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION include party membership and referendums.

NON-INSTITUTIONAL FORMS include demonstrations, signing petitions and donating money.

The **RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY** and **PETITION** has been enshrined in Austria's constitution since the so-called 'December Constitution' of 1867 and has been protected by the European Convention on Human Rights since 1958. These rights enable people to express their opinions publicly and without fear of repression. In Austria, the exercise of non-institutional participation was for a long time rather restrained, which can be attributed to the corporatist structures established after the Second World War. The major parties, the SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria) and ÖVP (Austrian People's Party), focused on consensus rather than conflict, which shaped the political landscape for a long time (proportional representation). Nevertheless, important protest movements have formed over the years and have increasingly played a central role in public life.

AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENT

Vienna, Theophil Hansen, 1879

The Austrian Parliament in Vienna (completed in 1879) was designed by the architect **THEOPHIL HANSEN** (1813 – 1891). Its style draws on ancient Greek architecture, reflecting the origins of democracy in 5th-century BC Athens.

The **FOUNTAIN OF ATHENA**, located in front of the parliament building, refers to the separation of powers as a fundamental principle: Pallas Athena stands for state wisdom, while the two allegorical figures sitting next to her symbolise 'legislation' (with a tablet of laws) and – visible here – the 'enforcement of laws' (with a sword of justice and scales).

YOUR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND SPEECH

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT AT THE SPEAKER'S DESK?

Speeches and counter-speeches are an essential process for the formation of public opinion and an integral part of democracy.

OPINION FORMATION is based on the exchange of different views. Freedom of expression forms the foundation of an open exchange of ideas and is a prerequisite for the political engagement of individuals.

The right to freely express one's opinion was first enshrined on 26 August 1789 in the French Revolution's **'DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND OF THE CITIZEN'**.

CITIZEN PROTESTS

An increased willingness to participate in politics has been evident in Austria and Germany since the beginning of the student protests in the 1960s, particularly since 1968. Initially viewed as civil disobedience, protests and political participation led to stronger identification with fundamental democratic values in the long term.

In Austria, protests against the planned **NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN ZWENTENDORF** (from 1974 onwards (with a referendum in 1978)) and the occupation of the Hainburger Au in 1984 over the construction of a Danube power plant have remained particularly vivid in the collective memory.

In Styria, citizen protests against the construction of a **NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY** on 27 October 1991 at Bosruck on the Styrian-Upper Austrian border and in 1993 against the **CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILWAY LINE** near the Enns between Liezen and Trautenfels led to political reversals.

OFFICIAL BALLOT PAPER FOR THE REFERENDUM on 5 November 1978 on the commissioning of the **ZWENTENDORF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT** and the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Austria.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILWAY LINE NEAR THE ENNS RIVER in 1993, which was planned between Liezen and Trautenfels.

FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE... calls for **MORE ATTENTION** to be paid to the global climate crisis.

These posters have been used by a group of schoolchildren since the spring of 2019 for several Fridays for Future demonstrations in **GRAZ**, including on 27 September 2019 as part of the Earth Strike demonstration, which was a major global demonstration organised by the Fridays for Future movement.

FLAG FOR THE RAINBOW PARADE

The original Pride flag with six rainbow colours was designed in San Francisco in **1978** by the American activist and artist **GILBERT BAKER**. Each colour has its own meaning: red stands for life, orange for health, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, blue for harmony and violet for spirit.



In **2018**, the flag was further developed by **DANIEL QUASAR**. The added black and brown arrows represent queer BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) and send a clear message against racism. White, light blue and pink stand for transgender people. The yellow background with a purple circle in the centre stands for the rights of intersex people – in particular, their right to bodily autonomy.

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

The reporting of traditional media (e.g. newspapers, television and radio) is characterised by **JOURNALISTIC QUALITY STANDARDS** such as research, fact-checking and the separation of news and commentary. This is intended to ensure the greatest possible objectivity and protection against excessive bias and disinformation.

One of the tasks of media is to critically reflect and comment on government activities in order to expose any abuses and preserve the fundamental democratic values of a society. Accordingly, media is an essential building block of a working democracy, wherein **FREEDOM OF THE PRESS** must be guaranteed.

At the same time, **SOCIAL MEDIA** enables users to disseminate information. Changes to algorithms or fake accounts can even be used to deliberately manipulate elections, as demonstrated by the recent presidential elections in the United States of America and Romania in 2024.

EU REGULATION No. 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and the European Council came into force on 16 November 2022 and has been applied throughout the Union since 17 February 2024. Among other things, it requires internet platforms to disclose the criteria they use to moderate content.

COMPARE REPORTS ON THE TOPIC OF 'DEMOCRACY' FROM THE AUSTRIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE OVER THE PAST MONTH.

In cooperation with CLIP Mediaservice, we survey the Austrian print media outlets *Der Standard*, *Kurier*, *Die Kronen Zeitung*, *Die Kleine Zeitung*, *Falter* and *Grazer* on a monthly basis and update the selection at the beginning of each month.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY: FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT

DAY

5TH CENTURY BC Ancient Greece

Birth of democracy under Herodotus, Pericles and Thucydides in Athens [1]

1215 Magna Carta Libertatum

A milestone in the development of parliamentarianism, democracy and the rule of law [2]

1450 – 1850 Early Modern Period [4]

1651 Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679)

'Leviathan' [5]

1748 Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755)

'The Spirit of Laws' (original French title 'De l'esprit des loix') [5]

1ST CENTURY BC Roman constitution (Res Publica)

Roman statesman Cicero

1338 – 40 Allegories of good and bad government with their consequences in town and country,

fresco cycle by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1290 – 1348), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena [3]

CIRCA 1450 Invention of printing

1690 John Locke (1632 – 1704)

'Two Treatises on Government' [5]

1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778)

‘The Social Contract or Principles of Political Law’ (original French title ‘Du contract social ou Principes du droit politique’) [5]

1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights
Codification of comprehensive fundamental and human rights

1789 French Revolution – 14 July: Storming of the Bastille

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen [8]

1830 ‘July Revolution’ in France

1862 Introduction of laws to protect personal freedoms and domestic rights

1873 Reichsrat election reform – certain women are given the right to vote

1914 – 1918 First World War

 specific development in Austria-Hungary (highlighted in yellow)

1775 – 1783 American War of Independence [6]

1787 American Constitution [6]

1791 Olympe de Gouges (1748 – 1793)

‘Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen’ [7]

1848* Revolution

1867 ‘December Constitution’

1907 Universal male suffrage in Austria

1918 End of the Habsburg Monarchy – Founding of the ‘Republic of German-Austria’ (‘First Republic’)

1919/1920 Paris Peace Conference (Suburban Treaties), Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 10 September 1919

1919: Founding of the ‘Republic of Austria’

1920, 1 OCTOBER Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Austria ‘Kelsen Constitution’

1934 – 38 ‘Corporate State’ versus ‘Austrofascism’

1939 – 1945 Second World War – Shoah and Holocaust

1945 Foundation of the ‘Second Republic’

1952 Foundation of the European Court of Justice (ECJ)

1919 First general, free, secret, equal elections in Austria, including women

1933 End of parliamentarianism in Austria – end of the ‘First Republic’

1938 – 1945 Austria after its annexation into the German Reich as Ostmark, part of the National Socialist ‘German Reich’

1945 End of the Second World War
Foundation of the United Nations (UN)

Foundation of the International Court of Justice with its seat in The Hague

1949 Foundation of the Council of Europe

1953 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, and Fundamental Freedoms entered into force as an international treaty

1955 Austrian State Treaty

1959 Establishment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with headquarters in Strasbourg

1978 Founding of Human Rights Watch (NGO in New York)

1984 Citizen protests in Austria
Occupation of the Hainburg floodplain

1994 Referendum on Austria's accession to the EU

1995 International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance)

Institute for the promotion of democracy worldwide

2007 Reduction of the voting age in Austria to 16

1958 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) incorporated into the Austrian Constitution

1968 Reduction of the voting age in Austria (active voting rights from 18 years of age, passive voting rights from 25)

1978 Citizen protests in Austria:
Nuclear power? No thanks!

Referendum prevents the construction of the Zwentendorf nuclear power plant

1992 Maastricht Treaty

Foundation of the European Union (EU) – EU Constitution

1995 Austria joins the EU

1998 Establishment of the International Criminal Court, based in The Hague

[1]

5TH – 1ST CENTURY BC: GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

In contrast to the Greek historians Thucydides and Herodotus, who deal with constitutions in their works 'The Peloponnesian War' and 'Histories', respectively, and are positively disposed towards the concept of democracy, the Greek philosophers Plato (428/427 – 348/347 BC) and Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) offered criticism against democracy. For them, democracy meant 'rule by the mob'.

The concept of radical democracy reached its peak under the demagogue Pericles in ancient Athens in the 5th century BC.

In ancient Rome, it continued in the form of the Roman constitution. In his work 'De re publica', the statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 – 43 BC) deals with the constitution of Rome and describes the state as a matter for the people. This republican thinking was revived during the Age of Enlightenment, where it found its way into modern concepts of the state through ideas like the separation of powers and checks and balances.

[2]

1215: MAGNA CARTA LIBERTATUM

The **Magna Carta Libertatum**, dating back to 1215, stipulated that no tax could be levied in England without first consulting the Commonwealth. In addition to the consultation, the English king also needed the consent of the men of his kingdom.

From this system, the institution of parliament developed in England from the middle of the 13th century onwards. It was to meet and sit at least once a year.

[3]

INDEPENDENT CITY-STATES – AMBROGIO LORENZETTI

1338 – 40:

Allegories of good and bad government and their consequences in the city and countryside, fresco cycle by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1290 – 1348), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.

With the Roman concept of democracy (especially concerning the works of Cicero) in mind, various city-states in the Middle Ages had secured their independence from the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope by the end of the 12th century. These city-states included the Italian cities of Arezzo, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Padua and Siena.

The good government of the virtuous ruler unites the citizens of all social classes in harmony.

Bad government, on the other hand, is influenced by demons and leads to tyranny.

[4]

DEMOCRACY – FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

In the age of humanism, encapsulated during the Renaissance and the Reformation, a new view of humanity developed against the backdrop of ancient authors, and this new view placed particular emphasis on the individuality of each person.

This also sparked a new question: what social, political and economic role should individuals play in the context of society? Initially, this referred exclusively to male citizens.

It was not until the early modern period (1450 – 1850) that the basic idea of democracy as rule by the people was taken up again by various authors and political theorists. Of particular importance in this context was the invention of printing with movable type by Johannes Gutenberg (circa 1400 – 1468).

[5]

DEMOCRATIC THEORISTS AS PRECURSORS OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679), John Locke (1632 – 1704), Baron de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) are regarded as pioneers of the further development of democratic processes in England, France and America.

It was the Italian philosopher and diplomat Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) who, in his work *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius (1513 – 1519)), first addressed

questions of government and state organization — in the context of the political environment of the Italian city-states.

The idea of the social contract connects Thomas Hobbes with John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau ultimately rejected the doctrine of the divine right of kings and, in return, devised the utopia of a kind of iden-tarian democracy.

Ultimately, Rousseau advocates for a democratic republic model, in which laws are enacted by the entire citizenry and enforced by an elected government.

Montesquieu ultimately favours the separation of powers, i.e. the division of state power into the legislative (law-making power), the executive (en-forcing power) and the judiciary (judicial power).

[6]

DEVELOPMENTS TOWARDS MODERN DEMOCRACY DURING THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The political philosophies of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau exerted a major influence on leading authors and politicians, such as Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826), Maximilien de Robespierre (1758 – 1794) and Georges Danton (1759 – 1794), and had a major influence on both the American Revolution (1775 – 1783) and the French Revolution (1789 – 1799).

The American Constitution was finally adopted on 17 September 1787, and the French Constitution was adopted by the French National Assembly on 3 September 1791.

The first two articles of the French Constitution state:

1. ‘Men are born free, they remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be based only on the common good.’
2. ‘The ultimate goal of all political association is the preservation of natural and inalienable human rights. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.’

[7]

WOMEN FOR DEMOCRACY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The French writer and revolutionary **Olympe de Gouges** (1748 – 1793) aimed, with her demands for complete legal, political, social and economic equality between women and men in her '**Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen**' (French: 'Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne'), to establish a social contract between men and women that would also take inheritance rights into account.

In the first article, she demanded: 'Women are born free and remain equal to men in all rights. [...]'

Article 11 states: 'The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most valuable rights of women, [...]'.

She wrote an antislavery memorandum as early as 1774. This sentiment is further reflected in her play 'Zamor and Mirza' from 1785, in which she opposed the colonial exploitation of slaves.

In her essay 'Réflexions sur les hommes négres' from 1788, she called for the abolition of slavery.

In addition to Olympe de Gouges, other women were also active in advocating for female equality, such as the English writer, philosopher and women's rights activist **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759 – 1797), the French-woman **Manon Roland** (1754 – 1793, real name: Jeanne-Marie 'Manon' Roland de La Platière) and the British writer, feminist sociologist, economist, historian and translator **Harriet Martineau** (1802 – 1876).

In 1792, **Mary Wollstonecraft** wrote 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. With Structures and Political and Moral Subjects', in which she spoke out against the 'tyranny of men against women'.

Manon Roland ran a political salon in Lyon and published her emancipatory ideas in, among other mediums, the revolutionary magazine 'Le Patriote Français'.

In her criticism of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, **Harriet Martineau**, like Olympe de Gouges, referred to the fact that, in keeping with the spirit of the times, it referred only to men.

In her work 'Society in America' (1837), Martineau points out how the ideals of freedom, equality and democracy formulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America failed to correspond to the social reality of the USA in many respects. She referred, in particular, to general social inequality, slavery and the oppression of women.

[8]

DECLARATIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT A GLANCE

The American **Virginia Bill of Rights**, dating back to 12 June 1776, is considered the oldest declaration of fundamental rights. Its first section states: 'All men are by nature equally free and independent and possess certain inherent rights, [...] namely the enjoyment of life and liberty, the means to acquire and possess property, and the pursuit and attainment of happiness and security.'

The **Declaration of Independence** of 4 July 1776 finally enshrined the equality of all people and individual human rights. Finally, human and civil rights were enshrined in the American Constitution by the Bill of Rights in 1791. However, it should be noted that approximately one third of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence owned slaves, and at that time, of the approximately 2.5 million Americans in the 13 states, 500,000 were black slaves. From this perspective, the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution did not reflect reality, as they only applied to men and not women, slaves and indigenous peoples.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was finally formulated by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, and it aimed to strengthen the validity of human and civil rights beyond Europe and America to the whole world. However, this is not a legally binding document. Since then, the international human rights code has been successively expanded beyond the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through several human rights agreements.

The **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (ECHR) was concluded on 4 November 1950 between the members of the Council of Europe (founded in 1949) as a legally binding convention for the protection of fundamental and human rights. The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and Luxembourg monitors its compliance.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union has been in force in Europe since 7 December 2000 and is intended to comprehensively guarantee all freedoms.

[9]

DEMOCRACY IN AUSTRIA

1830

The French 'July Revolution' of 1830, triggered as a reaction against the abolition of free press and intentional enlargement of the nobility's political influence, led to the strengthening of liberal and revolutionary movements in many parts of Europe – for example in Belgium ('Belgian Revolution'), Poland ('November Uprising') and in various small German states. In Habsburg lands, the July Revolution initially had no significant impact on the development of democratic structures.

1848

The revolutions of 1848 was a European phenomenon brought about as a reaction to conservative and absolutist governments. In addition to nationalist aspirations and social reforms, there were calls for broad democratisation and, above all, greater political say for broader sections of the population, i.e. the legal equality of all citizens. This involved the right to vote and freedom of the press (abolition of censorship) as well as the abolition of feudal structures, i.e. the ending of subject relations (serfdom, land redemption, 'peasant liberation').

The revolutions of 1848 led to the first democratic approaches in the Habsburg Empire, such as the beginning of a gradual constitutional development and the installation of a parliament. However, the right to vote was severely restricted. Citizens, students and workers demanded a constitution and an elected parliament. As a result, only men aged 24 and over were allowed to vote and women – with a few exceptions – were excluded from the ballot. Until the introduction of universal, secret, free and equal suffrage in 1918, only those privileged women who were able to pay a corresponding tax were entitled to vote until 1907.

1862

The two laws of 27 October 1862 (R.G.Bl. 87/1862), on the protection of personal freedom and the protection of domestic authority (R.G.Bl. 88/1862), mark an important step in the development of fundamental rights in the Habsburg monarchy by giving individuals protection from state interference and enshrining that protection in fundamental laws.

1867

The Basic Law of 1867 ('December Constitution'), which contains a total of five basic laws of the state, not only strengthened parliament but also established 'general rights of citizens for the kingdoms and states represented in the Imperial Council' (StGG, also StGG 1867) – a catalogue of fundamental rights that still applies today.

This included, among other things:

- equality before the law (Art. 2)
- equal access to public offices for all citizens (Art. 3)
- freedom of movement of persons (Art. 4)
- the inviolability of property (Art. 5)
- the freedom of residence (Art. 6)
- the abolition of all forms of servitude, bondage and shared ownership (Art. 7)
- the liberty of the person (Art. 8)
- the right of domicile (Art. 9)
- the secrecy of correspondence (Art. 10)
- the right of petition (Art. 11)
- freedom of association and assembly (Art. 12)
- freedom of the press (Art. 13)
- freedom of religion and conscience (Art. 14)
- the public practice of religion for legally recognised churches and religious societies (Art. 15)
- the private practice of religion for adherents of other religious denominations (Art. 16)
- the freedom of science and its teaching (Art. 17)
- the freedom to choose an occupation (Art. 18)
- the equal rights of all tribes of the state (Art. 19)

1873

In 1873, the direct election of parliament members was introduced without the need of going through the provincial legislature. With the exception of large estates, the right to vote for all other curiae (cities, markets, industrial towns, chambers of commerce and trade, rural communities) was only given to men. The rural communities, however, continued to elect their representatives indirectly through electors. The curia of large landowners also included so-called 'self-entitled' women, i.e. women who represented themselves and were entitled to vote.

1907

1907 sees the abolition of the curia and the introduction of universal male suffrage, which means that all men aged 24 and over who have held Austrian citizenship for at least three years and have been resident in Austria for at least one year now have the right to vote.

From 1907 to 1918, women were generally excluded from voting.

1918

After the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918, a 'Democratic Republic of German Austria' was proclaimed by a provisional national assembly on 12 November 1918, which declares itself to be 'part of the German Republic' in Article 2. With the law on the form of state and government of 12 November 1918, women now also receive the general, free, secret and equal right to vote.

16 FEBRUARY 1919

In the election to the constituent National Assembly (still 'German Austria') on 16 February 1919, women are also entitled to vote for the first time under direct, free, equal and secret suffrage.

FROM 4 MARCH 1919

In the first session of the constituent National Assembly, there were also eight female deputies: these were Anna Boschek, Emmy Freundlich, Adelheid Popp, Gabriele Proft, Therese Schlesinger, Amalie Seidel and Maria Tusch of the Social Democratic Labour Party and Dr Hildegard Burjan of the Christian Social Party.

Finally, the State Treaty of Saint-Germain (10 September 1919) prohibited the unification of Austria (under the new name 'Democratic Republic of Austria') with the Weimar Republic.

1920

The Austrian Federal Constitution, which ultimately legitimises Austria as a democratic republic, was drafted by the Austrian jurist Hans Kelsen (1881 - 1973). It is still referred to today as the 'Kelsen Constitution'.

However, a democratic culture, in an autonomous political co-determination sense, is only established in Austria after 1945 during the Second Republic. Citizen protests, as an expression of political co-determination, have been part of Austrians' right to a political say since the late 1960s and have taken the shape of protests against a nuclear power plant in Zwentendorf (from 1974), the occupation of Hainburger Au (1984), the Sea of Lights (1993) and protests against Corona measures (2021).

THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

In the European context, **POPULIST PARTIES** are particularly associated with the right-wing political spectrum.

The populism of right-wing parties focuses on **ISSUES** such as **MIGRATION** and **CRIME** and pushes **NATIONALIST IDEOLOGIES**.

Populism is characterised by

- a focus on terms such as **'PEOPLE'**, **'LITTLE MAN'** or **'ORDINARY CITIZEN'**
- a strong emphasis on categories: **I, WE AND THE OTHERS**
- the **COMMUNICATION OF COLLECTIVE** fears and their justification primarily through 'the others' (scapegoat motif)

“Populism distrusts all institutions that have a certain institutional independence, such as the constitutional courts or the free press. [...] This populist mistrust of the institutions of representative democracy is often accompanied by a disdain for, and sometimes even rejection of, the constitutionally guaranteed rights of ethnic, national, cultural and religious minorities.”

Hans Vorländer, Demokratie – in der Krise und doch die beste Herrschaftsform?, in: Informationen zur politischen Bildung, 332/1, 2017, S. 72-81, S. 76.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

The Democracy Index describes the presence and characteristics of a country's democratic structures. It is compiled by the international magazine 'Economist', among others, and has been published there since 2006.

CATEGORIES like electoral process and pluralism are used for the assessment:

- electoral process and pluralism
- citizens' rights
- functioning of the government
- political participation
- political culture

On this basis, countries are ranked on a **SCALE** of 0 and 10, whereby four categories are distinguished:

- complete democracies
- incomplete democracies
- hybrid regimes
- authoritarian regimes

There are currently **25 COMPLETE DEMOCRACIES WORLDWIDE**. Austria is in 19th place in this ranking, just behind Costa Rica and ahead of Mauritius, Estonia and Spain.

The Democracy Index 2024 (published in February 2025) covers 167 countries.

ELECTION POSTERS AND ELECTION PROMISES

Modern democracies are generally organised on a representative basis. This means that political decisions are made by the elected representatives of the people. In liberal democracies, the majority principle is based on the rule of law.

Accordingly, general, free, equal and secret elections are held regularly. They therefore represent a fundamental principle of modern democratic states. Accordingly, voters have a responsibility to choose the party that corresponds to their own goals by critically examining the respective election programmes and the election advertising of the political parties. As a result, voters are usually guided by the election promises communicated by the respective political parties, which are also known colloquially as **'ELECTION SWEETS'**.

The exhibition shows:

ELECTION POSTERS FROM THE LAST NATIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS in Austria on 29 September 2024.

With the kind permission of the following political parties:

ÖVP, SPÖ, FPÖ, Neos, Die Grünen, KPÖ and Liste Madeleine Petrovic.

ELECTION PLEDGES MADE BY POLITICAL PARTIES

ON THE TOPIC OF 'DEMOCRATIC REFORM' OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS

The selection shows **ELECTION PLEDGES** made by all parliamentary parties in Austria in the run-up to elections between 1990 and 2019 that relate to the development of our democratic system.

The number and (non-)implementation of election promises per party is based on party strength and government participation.

Analysis: Katrin Praprotnik

Further information: Katrin Praprotnik, Parteien und ihre Wahlversprechen.

Einblicke in die Politikgestaltung in Österreich. Wiesbaden 2017.

www.politikmonitor.at

FPÖ (2002): COST ACCOUNTING (ADMINISTRATION)

Cost accounting in the administration **WAS IMPLEMENTED** through the reform of Section 82 of the Federal Budget Act in 2004. Previously, cost accounting was only provided for on a case-by-case basis and was not mandatory across the board.

FPÖ : RETENTION OF THE ECONOMIC CHAMBER

The Economic Chamber **WAS RETAINED** as a representative body. In addition, various improvement measures were implemented as part of the reforms to the Economic Chamber Act 2018.

FPÖ (2002): DIRECT ELECTION OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS

NOT IMPLEMENTED: There is no direct election of provincial governors in Austria.

FPÖ (2002): FREEDOM OF INSTRUCTION FOR PUBLIC PROSECUTORS

NOT IMPLEMENTED: Public prosecutors in Austria are subject to instructions in accordance with paragraph 2 of the Public Prosecution Act.

ÖVP (2006): POSTAL VOTING AT ALL LEVELS

Postal voting **WAS MADE POSSIBLE**, and the reform of the Federal Constitution Act was published in the Federal Law Gazette on 29 June 2007.

ÖVP (2002): RETENTION OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Proportional representation **WAS RETAINED** (and still applies today).

ÖVP (2006): ELECTRONIC VOTING

NOT IMPLEMENTED: The option of electronic voting was not introduced.

ÖVP (2002): MANDATORY REFERENDUM IN THE EVENT OF SUCCESSFUL PETITIONS FOR A REFERENDUM (15% OF THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE)

NOT IMPLEMENTED: A reform that provides for a mandatory referendum in the event of successful petitions for a referendum (=15% of those eligible to vote) was not implemented.

SPÖ (2008): STARTING A CITIZENS' INITIATIVE FROM THE AGE OF 16

In the course of the legislative period, the 1975 Code of Procedure was amended; accordingly, a citizens' initiative can be started from the age of 16. This **WAS PUBLISHED** in the Federal Law Gazette on 6 April 2009.

SPÖ (2008): IMPROVEMENT OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN PARLIAMENT

In the legislative period from 2008 to 2013, an improvement of minority rights in parliament **WAS ACHIEVED** through several amendments to the 1975 Rules of Procedure Act.

SPÖ (1990): 100 CONSTITUENCIES

NOT IMPLEMENTED: This demand was not implemented by the end of the legislative period. There were (and still are) 43 regional constituencies – 9 provincial constituencies and 1 federal constituency.

SPÖ (2008): INDEPENDENT OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE FOR PUPILS

NOT IMPLEMENTED: Vienna has had an independent ombudsman's office for pupils since 2002. New ombudsman offices for pupils have not been opened.

GRÜNE (2019): FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The Freedom of Information Act was passed in the National Council on 31 January 2024. The Freedom of Information Act **WILL ENTER INTO FORCE** in September 2025.

GRÜNE (2019): USE OF FURTHER DEMOCRATIC INSTRUMENTS IN THE EVENT OF SUCCESSFUL BUT IGNORED REFERENDUMS

NOT IMPLEMENTED: The National Council is still not obliged to take additional steps after debating a referendum (with over 100,000 votes).

NEOS (2017): ABOLITION OF OFFICIAL SECRECY

NOT IMPLEMENTED: There was no implementation within the legislative period for which this election promise was made. However, the abolition of official secrecy was decided in the following legislative period, albeit without the votes of the NEOS. The NEOS would have liked a more far-reaching reform.

FROM ELECTORAL VOTE TO MANDATE – WHAT IMPORTANCE DOES MY VOTE HAVE?

The path from electoral vote to mandate takes place over several steps and in Austria is based on proportional representation, which is intended to ensure that the distribution of seats in parliament corresponds to the will of the voters.

The first step is to calculate how many of the 183 **SEATS** (the total allotment in the Austrian Parliament) go to each party.

The allocation takes place on several levels: First within the 39 **REGIONAL CONSTITUENCIES**, second in the nine provincial constituencies and last at the federal level. The seats are awarded according to this process.

The order of the **ELECTORAL LISTS**, which the parties determine before the election, is decisive for the distribution of seats to their respective individuals. Voters can thus support individual candidates by casting preferential votes.

You can see how this distribution works in practice by using the example of the Austrian National Council election on 29 September 2024 in the screen presentation 'From vote to man-date'.

Screen presentation – animation 'From vote to mandate'

Link: <https://vis.strategieanalysen.at/mandate2024/>

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – REFERENDUM

In addition to referendums and plebiscites, which are initiated by the National Council and the Federal Government, respectively, a referendum is a procedure in Austria that is initiated by the **POPULATION** so that they might **DIRECTLY INFLUENCE LEGISLATION**.

After the initiation and registration process, a referendum must be supported by at least 100,000 eligible voters in Austria before it is submitted to the National Council. If the referendum is accepted by the National Council, or if a referendum is held in favour of the referendum, either a law is accordingly amended or a new law can be passed. The referendum is therefore an instrument of direct democracy that allows the population to intervene directly in legislation.

VOTE AT THE POLLING STATION IN FAVOUR OF ONE OF THE SELECTED CURRENT REFERENDUMS!

AND NOW CAST YOUR VOTE!

Democracy thrives on publicity and transparency, on all citizens speaking and acting together.

Modern democracy is a representative democracy in which the people express their will through free elections.

WHAT IS THE MOST PRESSING POLITICAL ISSUE FOR YOU AT THE MOMENT?

Cast your vote on the ballot papers in the voting booths for selected current referendums!

Two original voting booths and ballot boxes from the city of Graz.
On loan from the City of Graz.

DEMOCRACY LIBRARY

ANCIENT HISTORIANS AND THE DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

HERODOTUS

Herodotus of Halicarnassus(os) (ca. 490/480 – ca. 430/420 BC) describes the Persian Wars in his 5th-century BC work **'HISTORIES'** and provides a constitutional debate in which forms of government are explained:

“But when the people rule, this has first of all the most beautiful name of all, equality before the law. Secondly, however, it does nothing of what the autocrat does: it appoints the offices by lot, and each office is accountable; but it leaves all decisions to the general public. Therefore, I now give my opinion that we should give up autocracy and leave all power to the people, for everything is contained in the people.”

THUCYDIDES

The Athenian historian Thucydides (before 454 – between 399 and 396 BC) influenced the political situation, particularly through his work **'THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR'**, in which he characterises democracy as follows:

“The constitution (politeía) under which we live is not comparable to any other; we are much more a model for anyone else than an imitator of others. It is called by name, because the state is not based on a few citizens but on a larger number, the rule of the people (dēmokratía).”

PLATO

In his work **'POLITEIA'** (The State), written in 375 BC, the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427 – 348/347 BC) pursues the idea of justice in an ideal state. However, Plato was just as critical of democratic forms of government as Aristotle. For example, both equated it with ‘mob rule’:

“[...] A democracy arises [...] when the poor win and kill or banish their opponents, but all others participate in the constitution and offices according to equal rights.”

CICERO

In his six-volume work **'DE RE PUBLICA'** (54 – 51 BC), the philosopher, orator and politician Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) deals with various forms of the constitution:

“The state is therefore the business of the people; but the people is not every association of people that has been formed in any way. Rather, it is that association of a crowd of people which has been united on the basis of their agreement in the conception of law and their commonality of the benefits of association”.

DEMOCRATISATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN EARLY MODERN TIMES

Between 1751 and 1780, the ‘Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers’ (Encyclopedia or Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts) by **DENIS DIDEROT** (1713 – 1784) and Jean-Baptiste le Ronde (known as **D’ALEMBERT**, 1717 – 1783) was published in 35 volumes, thus making that era’s entire contemporary world knowledge accessible to the public for the first time. This was a first step towards the democratisation of knowledge.

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

THOMAS HOBBS

The English state theorist and philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) is best known for his works **'DE CIVE'** (On the Citizen) and **'LEVIATHAN'** (1651). ‘Leviathan’ is based on the idea of a kind of natural law, one that legitimises the monarchy through a civil-social contract with the rulers and which is determined by assembly and majority vote:

“The only way to establish such a general power [...] lies in the transfer of all its power and strength to one man or an assembly of men, who can reduce their individual wills to one will by a majority vote.”

JOHN LOCKE

In his main political work, **'TWO TREATISES ON GOVERNMENT'** from 1690, the English physician and philosopher John Locke (1632 – 1704) proposes a social contract between rulers and male citizens.

For him, basic civil rights include the protection of life, liberty and property, a divinely revealed natural right to life as well as equality, freedom and property.

The idea of the social contract grants citizens more rights of resistance against the state and reforms the absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy. Locke formulates the first comprehensive conception of the separation of powers into executive and federal or legislative and prerogative powers:

“The people nevertheless retain the supreme power to recall or alter the legislature, if they are of opinion that the legislature is contrary to the confidence reposed in it.”

CHARLES DE SECONDAT, BARON DE MONTESQUIEU

Following John Locke, the French state theorist and philosopher Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755) is regarded as the founder of the three state powers doctrine – the so-called separation of powers. His main work **'DE L'ESPRIT DES LOIX MONTESQUIEU'** was published in 1748:

“Furthermore, there is no freedom if the judicial power is not separated from the legislative and executive powers. If it is linked to the legislative power, the power over the life and liberty of citizens would be arbitrary, because the judge would be the legislator.”

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

The French philosopher and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) is considered a pioneer of the French Revolution.

With his 1762 work ‘On the Social Contract or Principles of Constitutional Law’ (**'DU CONTRAT SOCIAL OU PRINCIPES DU DROIT POLITIQUE'**), Rousseau created a classic of democratic theory through his concept of political legitimacy by popular sovereignty:

“If, therefore, one disregards everything in the social contract that does not belong to its essence, one will find that it is limited to the following: Together we all, each of us, place his person and all his strength under the supreme guiding principle of the common will; and we, as a body, take the member as an inseparable part of the whole.”

DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONSTITUTIONS

THE VIRGINIA DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF 1776

This document is considered the first codification of comprehensive fundamental and human rights. The Declaration of Rights was the model for the French Declaration of Human and Civil Rights of 1789.

AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776

The American Declaration of Independence was adopted on 4 July 1776, just a few weeks after the Virginia Declaration of Rights. It states the separation of the United States from Great Britain:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments have been instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1787

The Constitution of the United States of America was finally adopted on 17 September 1787. It provides for the separation of state powers into executive, legislative and judicial branches, which check and balance each other. The principles of the Constitution – like the separation of powers – go back to political concepts developed during the Age of Enlightenment.

OLYMPE DE GOUGES

In 1791, the French writer, women's rights activist and revolutionary Olympe de Gouges (1748 – 1793) penned the 'Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen' ('Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne'). Her work referred to the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen' (**'DÉCLARATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DU CITOYEN'**) which was adopted by the French National Assembly on 26 August 1789.

This work of hers called for the complete legal, political, social and economic equality of women, which was not realised at the time. She is considered one of the earliest pioneers of the women's rights movement.

HANS Kelsen AND THE AUSTRIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1920

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Austria of 1 October 1920, known as the 'Kelsen Constitution', has become the cornerstone of the Austrian state and thus of democracy in modern-day Austria.

PROTEST FROM THE AIR

On 27 October 1991, around **6,000 PEOPLE** protested in the Styrian-Upper Austrian border region at the foot of the Bosruck against a nuclear waste storage facility planned to be built there.

This protest was reinforced by a **PARAGLIDER**, who flew over the demonstrators as they formed a human chain over the Ardninger Sattel.

The sail of this paraglider has a surface area of 26 m² and is made of polyester. The pilot hangs from Dyneema lines and steers the aircraft using steering lines. The weight of all the flying equipment comes to 18 kg, and the total takeoff weight of this model is between 70 and 110 kg.

THE PATH TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS** (SDGs), which relate to the various areas of life, comprise 17 aspects that were formulated by the United Nations in 2015.

These promote sustainable development and should be achieved worldwide by 2030.

The main aim is to promote a peaceful, humane and environmentally friendly world.



WHAT DO YOU STAND UP FOR? WHAT WOULD YOU PROTEST AGAINST? WHAT DO YOU SEE AS A PEACEFUL, HUMANE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WORLD?

Democracy is more than just a political system: it is a part of our daily lives, one characterised by freedom of opinion, co-determination and the opportunity to shape change.

Democracy thrives on the exchange of ideas and the diversity of voices.
EVERY VOICE IS IMPORTANT!

