

# ACTION CONSTITUTION-MAKING AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

## AUSTRIA

### AUSTRIA IS A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND A FEDERAL STATE:

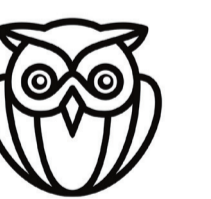
- o Very limited possibilities for direct and participatory democracy, though gradual improvement on the regional and communal level in recent years.
- o Binding decisions by direct democracy are limited to referenda; peoples' legislation is prohibited.
- o Only parliamentarians can initiate referenda and revise the Constitution.
- o Key role of the democratic process lies with the political parties.

### PARTICIPATION ON THE LEVEL OF PROVINCES AND COMMUNITIES (DUE TO FEDERALISM):

- Citizen councils in Vorarlberg and Salzburg, participatory democracy incorporated in those two constitutions (since 2013 resp. 2016)
- Local Agenda (based on UN Agenda 21), active in Austria since 1998
- Youth Federal State Parliaments (Styria, Salzburg, Burgenland)
- In some provinces, communal assemblies can be summoned by 5% of the electorate
- In some communities and provinces, advisory boards on certain issues including representatives of civil society exist (migration, youth, children)
- Participatory budgeting in some communities as well as some districts of Vienna

### PARTICIPATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE REPUBLIC:

- Study commission of the parliament on “strengthening democracy” in 2014/2015; few noteworthy results.
- Evaluation procedures for legislative proposals opened to the public in sept 2017.
- Current coalition agreement on further improvement of referenda, announced for 2021/22.
- But: recently, two petitions for referenda backed by several hundred thousand citizens were rejected by the governing parties (women's rights, smoking ban in restaurants)



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