



Democracy Workshop

of the Austrian Parliament

No. 2140

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Insights into the workings of
parliaments

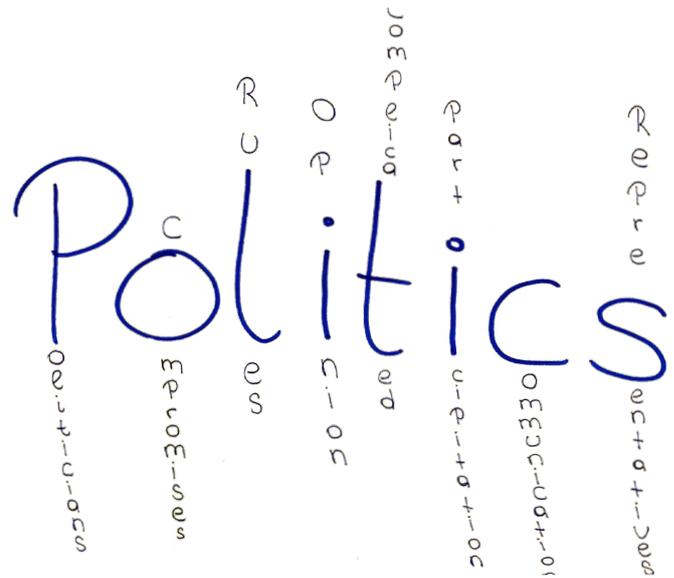
The students and politics

Natali (15), Inez (13), Rüzgar (13), Noemi (14), Patrick (14), Joao (15), Hannah (14) and Lena (14)

Today, on the 4th of April 2024, we, students from the Bilingual Junior High School of Wiener Neustadt, are in the Austrian Parliament to learn more about politics and what it means for our society.

Very excited, we entered the building of the Austrian Parliament, looking around and admiring our beautiful surroundings. We felt so important but still so little in this astonishingly huge building. Our trainer brought us to the 3rd floor, where we began our workshop. Everybody was very kind and welcoming. They explained to us a little bit more about politics and helped us understand better what the word “politics” means.

In our experience, many people are not really interested in the topic of politics. They may associate it with complicated arrangements and difficult choices. Many people also have the feeling that they don't understand politics,



When we think of politics, we think of the following.

which diminishes their interest. But that doesn't have to be like that at all. What they don't realize is that politics can happen everywhere. May it be at school, at home or at work! Politics is defined as „agreement on rules“. It contains all human action which aims to create binding rules for a community to work. Something considered political is discussing, communicating, sharing your opinions and so much more. Even when you are trying to convince your parents to let you meet up with your friends, that is considered political.

The job of a politician is way more complicated than talking and impressing. A good politician



Discussions and compromises are a big part of politics in a democracy.

has to represent the interests of the citizens and make important decisions which can and will impact a country.

Interview with Aleksandar Klarić and Harald Dossi (Secretary Generals of the Parliament of Montenegro and Austria)

The interview started with the question of how they got into politics. Mr. Dossi said that he studied at the university of Graz and had always been close to the political world. On the other hand, Mr. Klarić had gotten a call from the President of the Parliament of Montenegro, requesting that he'd be his advisor. On the 31st of March 2021, he was appointed Secretary General. A different question was about which languages they need to speak for their work as Secretary Generals. Mr. Klarić had picked up some languages over the years, including English, Italian, Serbian and even Arabic, which he learned whilst studying in Belgrade. Mr. Dossi needs to speak German and English on a daily basis.

We also talked about politics in dictatorship. Mr. Klarić explained that dictatorship starts when a person or politician starts to take the



By electing our representatives, we have a big influence on politics.

freedom from the population of its country. Mr. Dossi also had the same opinion that a dictator can ruin a functioning democracy, and that a democracy is always fighting against corruption of power-hungry people.

In our opinion, the interview provided some great insights into the political world of Montenegro and Austria.

But what does politics have to do with us?

Everybody can try to change a country, and to do that they might try themselves to become a politician. And even if we aren't politicians, we, as citizens, have a huge impact on political decisions. In Austria, you can vote with the minimal voting age of 16, which makes us have a major impact on political decisions.

To summarize it all, politics is the making of decisions which impact others. Politicians are the representatives of a community, which is often a country or a state, and even we, as citizens, have an impact on the decisions.



Democracy - why is it so important?

Aaron (14), Dominik (13), Sam (14), Aida (13), Mirijam (14), Esra (14),
Julia (14) und Zoey (15)



Our group talks about democracy. We discuss what democracy means to each one of us and how we can protect it.

What does democracy mean? If you consult a textbook, it means that there is not just one leader who decides everything, but the citizens can elect representatives and vote for important things. But there are still many different explanations. Democracy has a different meaning for each person. What does democracy mean for us in our everyday life? For us personally, democracy means that we live in a fair and welcoming environment where

everyone is able to say his or her own opinion. It means people can make decisions. But it also means politicians have to respect the opinions of the people when making decisions. We think human rights are an important part of democracy. Elections are a visible part of our daily life. Be it in school or in politics. Because of elections, we can express our personal opinions or wishes.

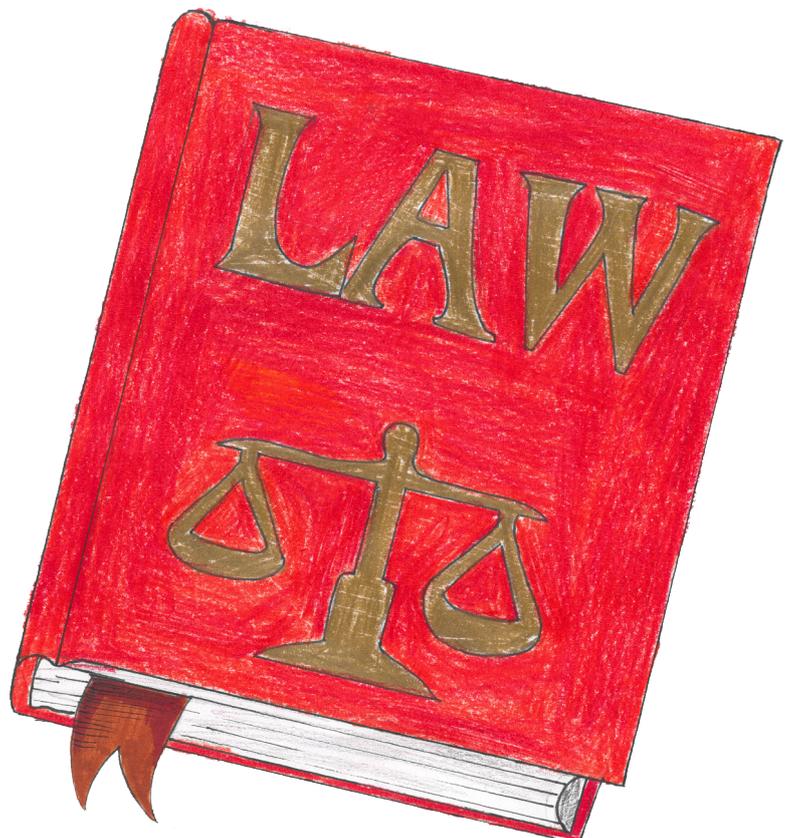
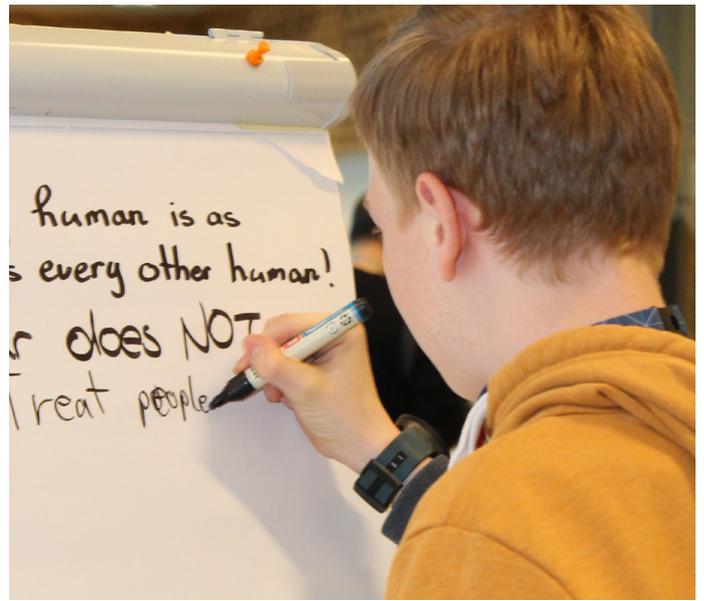
But which principles are important in a

democracy? At the core of democracy is the principle that every human is as important as every other human. We talked about this topic with Aleksander Klarić, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration of the Parliament of Montenegro, and Harald Dossi, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration of the Parliament of Austria. We asked them what democracy means for them. They said it means everything, and it is the best system to organize living together. It is the best way to become the best possible version of ourselves. We also asked them how we can strengthen our democracy. They replied you need motivation, and you have to do your best and don't lean back. You also have to prepare

decisions democratically.

We also thought about this question.

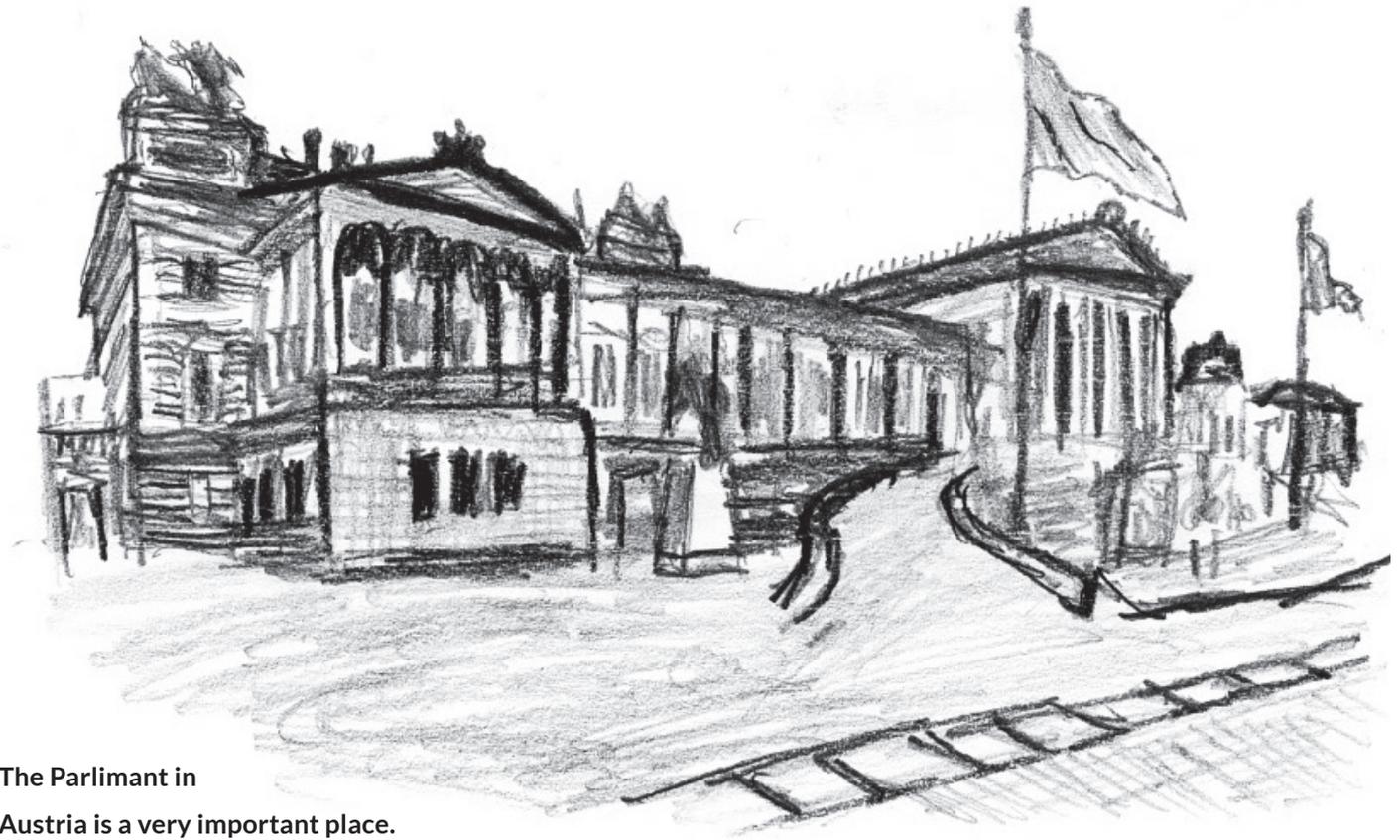
Parliament can protect the principles of democracy with laws. But we all have to do our part and treat people equally.



Parliament can strengthen democracy and protect it through laws.

BJHS visited parliament

Flora (13), Elaine (13), Belinay (13), Serafino (13), Ansu (13), Hanna (14) and Efe (14)



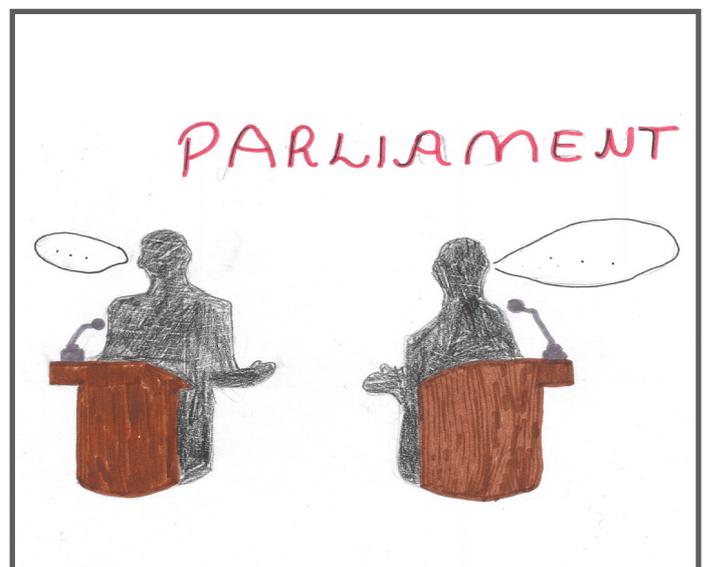
The Parliament in Austria is a very important place.

What is parliament?

The building of the Austrian Parliament is a very important place where laws are made, problems are discussed, and Democracy Workshops are held. Parliament is at the heart of every democracy.

It was established to make the world a safe place, it supports the country, and it is the best organization to live in a state.

Almost every country has a parliament and some kind of president. They have many similarities but also some differences, like different budgets or the number of chambers.



Elected representatives discuss important topics in parliament.

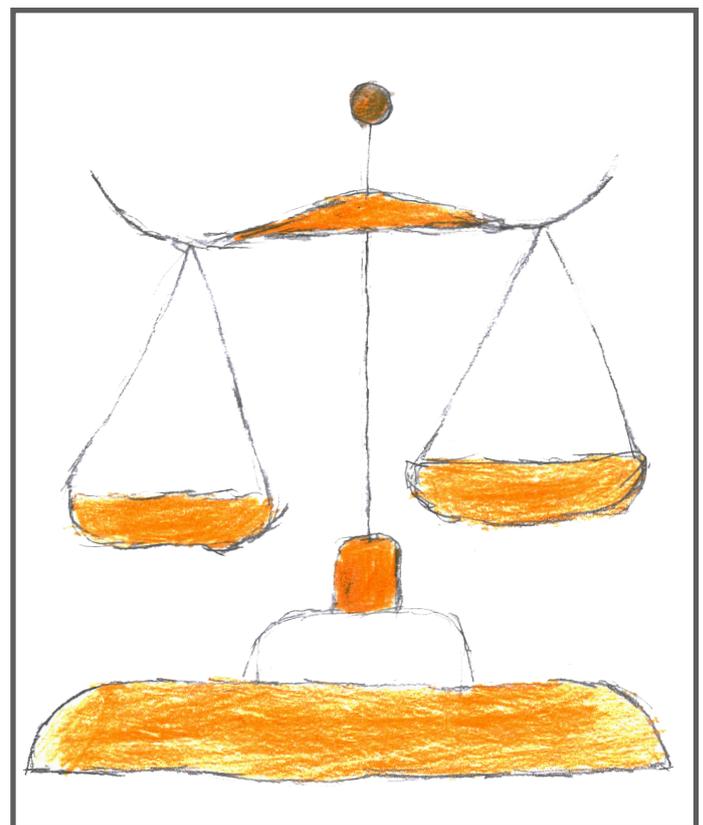
Interviews with two Secretary Generals of different Parliaments

Today, the 4th Grade (4F) of the Bilingual Junior High School Wiener Neustadt had the chance to have an interview with the Secretary Generals of Austria, Mr. Harald Dossi, and Montenegro, Mr. Aleksander Klarić. It was a great opportunity for us to see what they do exactly. We asked them interesting questions about their job and got many answers.

We found out that a Secretary General is a very important person in Parliament. Furthermore, they are heading administrations of experts and



communicate with the members of parliament. Of course, they also have a lot of other tasks to do. Because of that they work about 8–12 hours per day (also on the weekend). They told the students that they love their job and are proud of it. But there are also some “bad” sides to this job, like not having enough time with the family or constantly working on something. Like Mr. Dossi said: “I would call it difficult sides, not bad sides.”



Parliament is a place of rights and fairness.



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