

# The Millennial Dialogue Report

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Austria

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# methodology

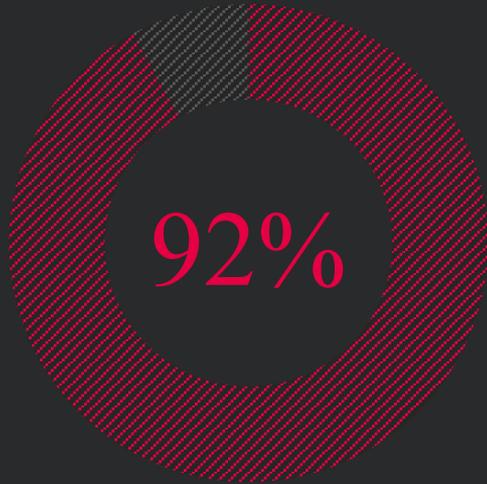
AudienceNet conducted an initial online survey amongst 1,105 15-34 year old Austrian residents and moderated a week-long, online dialogue with 40 Austrian Millennials, segmented as follows: the politically engaged; the mainstream and the politically disaffected.

The sample was recruited to be nationally representative of all Austrian Millennials in terms of: age; geographical region; household income and educational attainment levels.

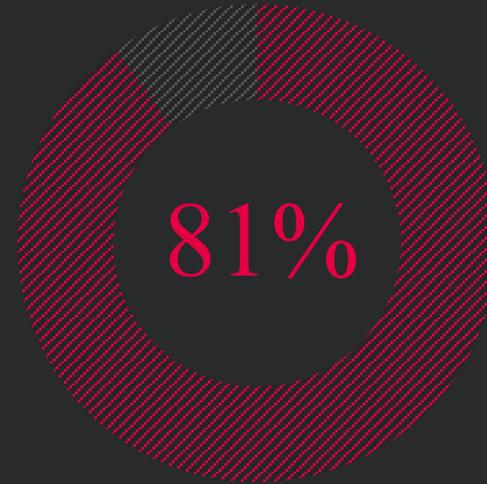
# Interest & engagement with politics



# Most young people in Austria are happy and optimistic...

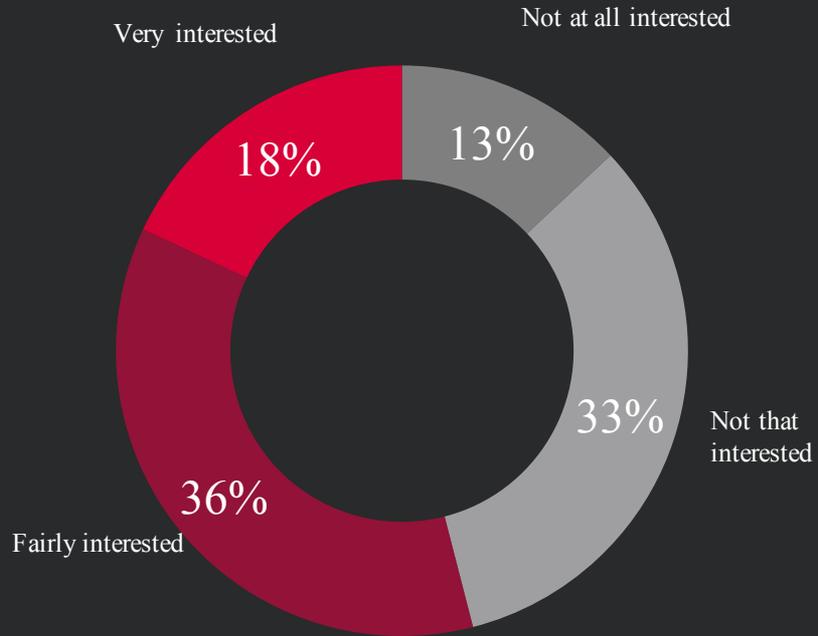


Are generally happy  
with their lives



Are optimistic about  
their future

# ...But interest in politics is low

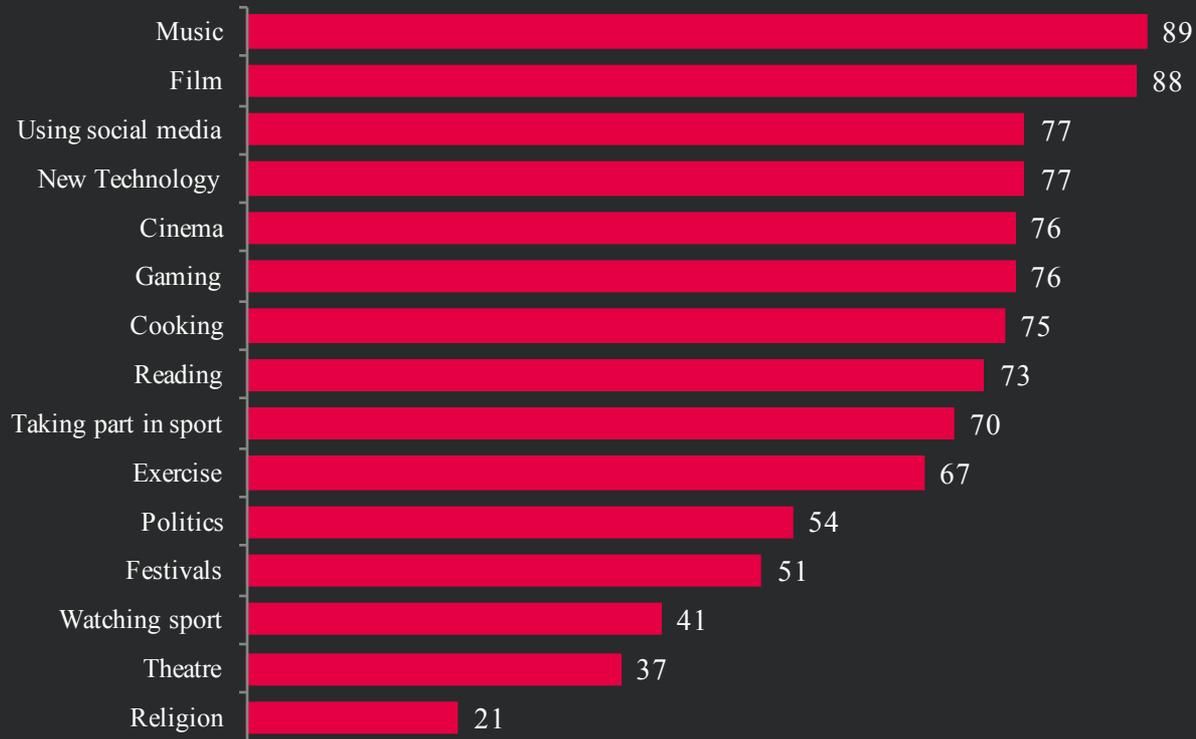


18%

said they were “very interested” in politics

# Music & film top the list of interests

(Net %: very interested / fairly interested)



# Taking an interest in politics is also not seen as being important

(Rank in order of importance)

1 Being in good health

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2 Being happy

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3 Having my voice heard

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4 Having leisure time

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5 Being free to do and say what I want

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6 Spending time with friends

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7 Spending time with family

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8 Making money

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9 Helping others

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10 Equality in society

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11 Being successful

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12 The well-being of society in general

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13 Contributing to society

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14 Taking an interest in music

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15 Being connected to friends via social media

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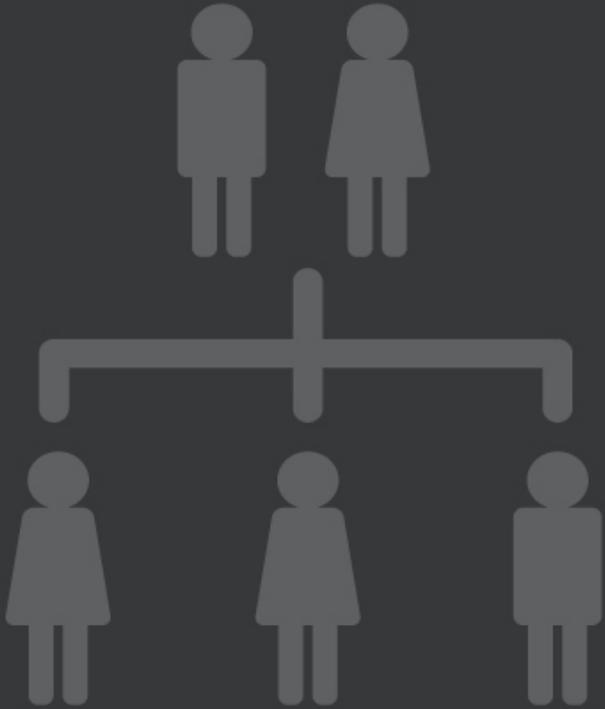
16 Being involved with my local community

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17 Taking an interest in politics

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# Generation gap



56%

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feel that their generation is less interested in politics than their parents' or grandparents' generation

15% think the reverse

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# Why are so few young people interested in politics?

When we asked why their generation was less interested in politics, the primary factors cited were that they felt nothing would change anyway, politicians not keeping their promises and no parties relating to young people.

“The reason young people aren't interested in politics is that they never see any change happening. Politicians just do what they want to do anyway.”

“I think a lot of people don't feel taken seriously. No one cares about their problems, fears and questions and if they do, it's usually not in a way that speaks to young people.”

”I think feeling misunderstood partly contributes to the fact that young people are turning their backs on politics. If you feel like no matter what you do, nothing is ever going to change anyway, it eventually leads to people not doing anything at all.”

”I grew up in a very political family, but I find it hard to support a party as they never represent my views 100%. Sometimes I'm so frustrated that I just want to close my eyes and ears and not have anything to do with it anymore.”

“Trustworthiness is what is missing in politics these days... unfortunately it's exactly what we need.”

# Why are so few young people interested in politics? (Cont.)

Others argued outdated structures in the political system were the main problem and some said there were simply more interesting activities than politics to engage with in their spare time.

”Politics is a great opportunity for change, however, the structures which seem to be extremely outdated need to be broken first to let in 'fresh air'.”

“I am convinced that many young people would be interested in politics if it no longer had the image of incomprehensible legal texts and gesticulating older people”

“Politics is very important in our globalised world. However, Austria's politics are outdated and a waste of money. All of the parties that we can vote for are shameful, politicians don't listen to our nation and they all look after themselves first, instead of representing our opinions. Young people are interested in politics, but not in corrupt, harmful and scandalous politics with no alternatives. If no one pays attention to young people, no wonder they turn their backs.”

”I think the reason why a lot of young people don't care about politics is that a lot of them don't feel like politics has anything to do with their real lives. If they were aware how much politics influences their everyday lives, they would show more interest.”

”One of the reasons young people aren't interested is that there are lots of other things that they can do instead; life offers many opportunities to live to the fullest and yet ignore the important things.”

# Taking part

7% said that they have attended a political meeting compared to 19% who said that they have taken part in a protest/demonstration

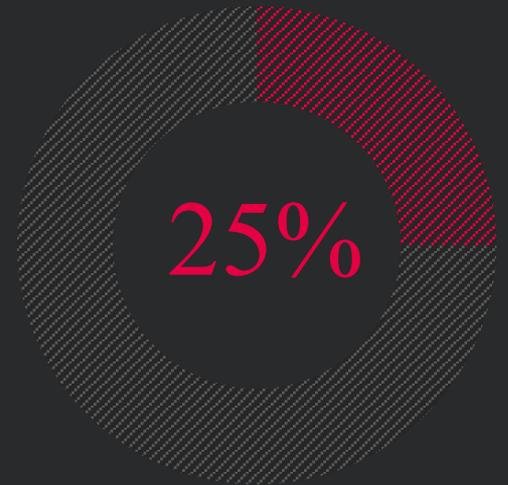
9%

Take part in  
political meetings

15%

Take part in  
protests/demonstrations

This compares to 12% who  
take part in religious  
meetings/events and...



who take part in team  
sports

# Politicians connecting with young people



12%

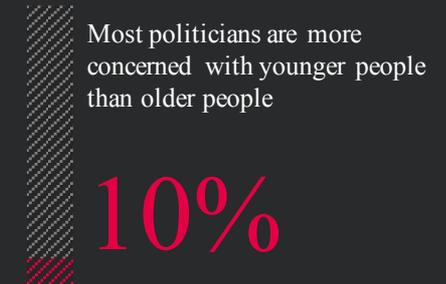
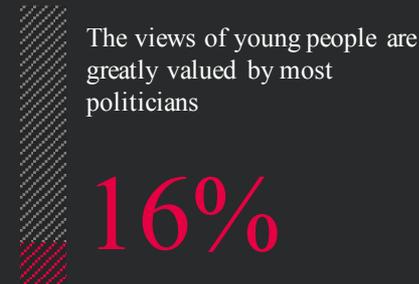
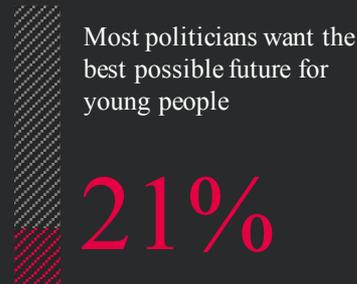
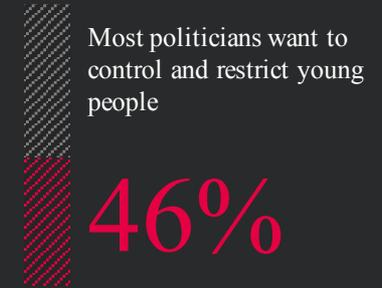
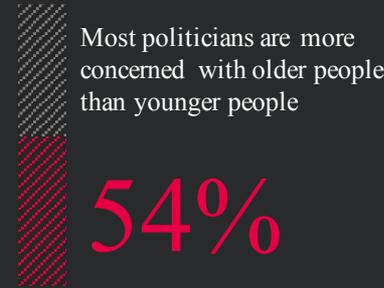
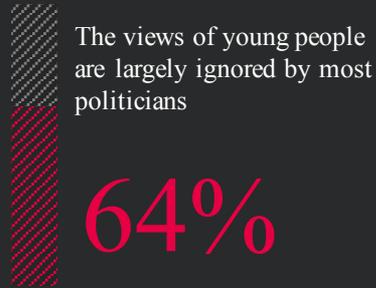
felt confident that they and their peers  
could make themselves heard

65%

think very few, if any, politicians  
encourage young people to get  
involved in politics

# % agreeing with statements

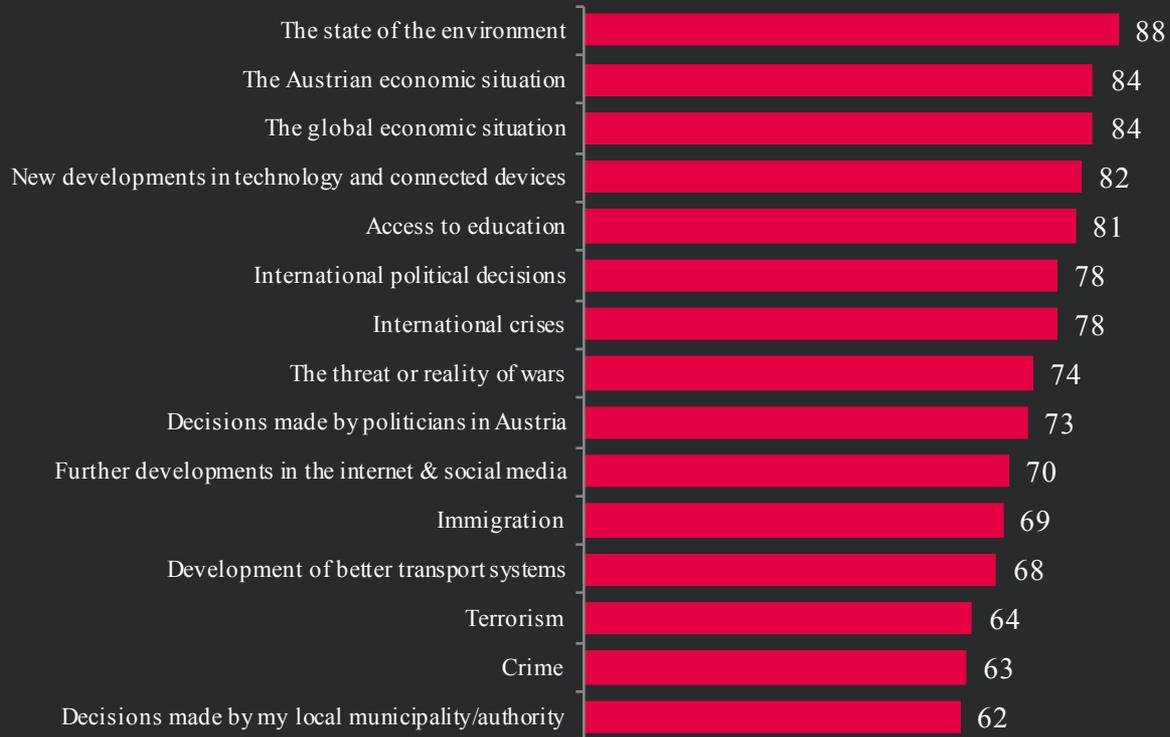
64% of Austrian millennials think that politicians ignore the views of young people.



# Looking to the future...

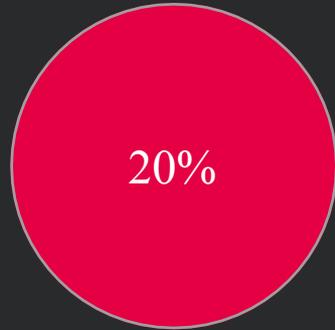


# Factors affecting future quality of life ('Very big effect' or 'some effect' %)



Millennials think “the state of the environment” will be the top factor influencing their future quality of life.

# What would they rather be?



Business Owner  
or Founder



Sportsperson



Research  
Scientist



Musician



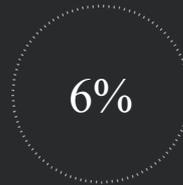
Famous  
Celebrity



Writer



Doctor



Academic



Lawyer



Politician



Religious  
Leader

# Time Travel Activity | **their own future**

We asked the participants to imagine that they could travel 20-30 years in to the future and describe what they think their lives will be like. Most people think they will be living a happy family life with a stable job.

“In 20-30 years, I'll be 40-50 years old. I hope that I will be able to look back on a successful career and to be financially stable. Most importantly, I hope I'll have a loving family and that all of us will be healthy.”

“I hope that we'll be moving to a different area. Away from the past. A nice little house. All of us happy with our jobs. Our children growing up happily. No worries and no problems.”

“In 20–30 years, I want to have a job that I enjoy, a house, a family and financial stability.”

“I don't want to change anything in the near future. Later on I want to have a job that I enjoy, a house, family and be financially stable. Alternatively, I would also be happy to take the euro million jackpot and free trip till the end of my life.”

# Time Travel Activity | Austria

When we asked what the country might be like in 20-30 years time, most people expected Austria to be a more diverse country, with many immigrants coming to the country in the coming years. Many also thought there would be rapid technological advances and hoped for a greener future.

“I think Austria will be more colourful than it is now and various people will live here. Maybe our borders will disappear more and more due to the rising mobility in people's jobs and immigration. I hope there will still be peace, but I'm not too sure about that. Austria will have to deal with a lot of problems: resource constraints, different kinds of people, overpopulation.”

“In 20 years we'll have to rely more on alternative energy and it will be possible to reach places faster with new means of transportation. Public transport will be extended and cheaper. The reason for these changes will be a decline in resources such as mineral oils. Houses will be better insulated, so there will be no need for heating and air conditioning.”

“The retirement age will be raised to 70. The only way to save the pension system is for young migrants to come to Austria. That will lead to the fact that almost half of the Austrian population will come from a migrant background. The reason for that development will be women having children later in life or not at all. The reason for that is that the young generation today either doesn't have enough money or enough time to have children”

# Time Travel Activity | Government

When we asked what the government might be like in 20-30 years time, many hoped government structures would be modernised, but most doubted it would happen. Almost all Millennials we asked thought voting would happen online.

“The government will hopefully be more tolerant and more connected than now. I would hope for different states to work together more to solve global problems quicker. Voting will only be done electronically. Maybe at home with a smart-watch or mobile phone.”

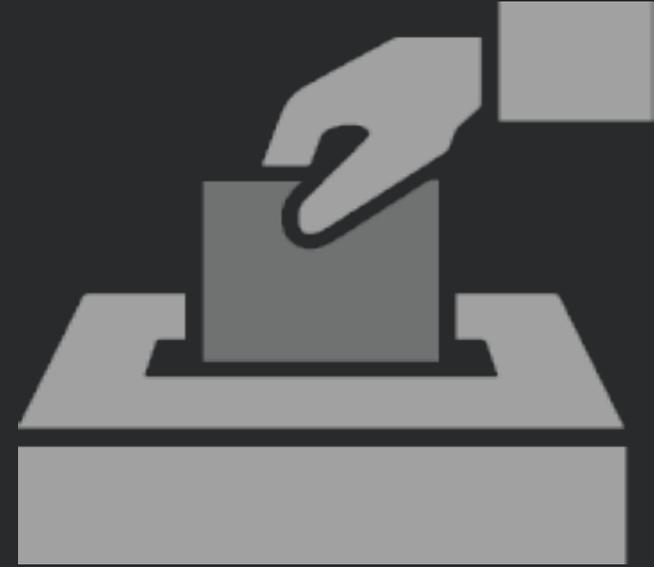
“I don't think the government is going to change. After all there hasn't been a change for years.”

“As for the government, a lot of things will change, not in a positive way though. Politics will slowly develop in two extreme directions - extremely right-wing and extremely left-wing. The middle class will slowly die out, the richer will get richer and the number of poor people will rise.”

“I hope that a lot will change and that parties will work together to achieve productive results. As an educated Austrian, I think the government will stay the same and not move forward though.”

“I hope Austria will hold on to its traditions, even with the country becoming more modern with new technologies. Voting will be possible online or through an app.”

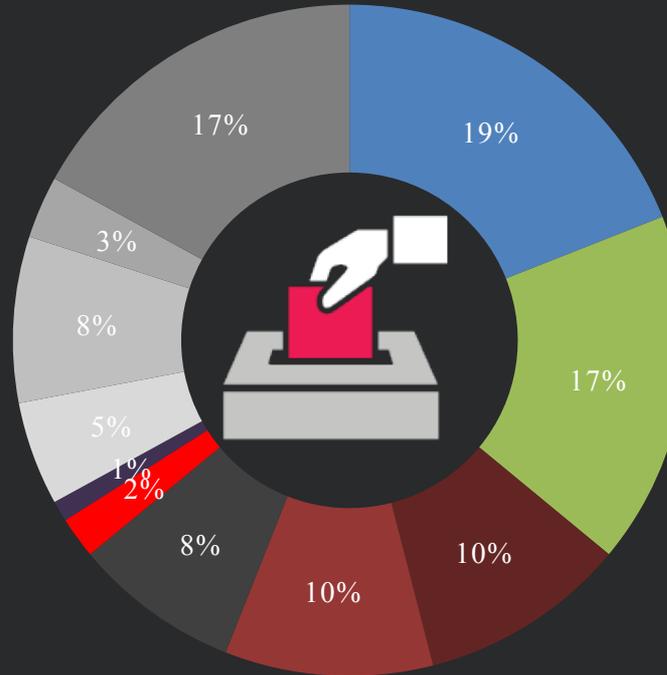
# Voting



# If there was an election tomorrow...

# 79%

Said that they would vote ...



- Freedom Party of Austria
- The Greens – The Green Alternative
- NEOS – The New Austria
- Social Democratic Party of Austria
- Austrian People's Party
- Communist Party of Austria
- Pirate Party of Austria
- Other
- Don't know
- None of the above
- Not prepared to say

# Key reasons for not wanting to vote

1

Lack of trust in politicians

2

There isn't a party that represents their views

3

They're not interested in politics

4

They don't support the current political system

5

They think all politicians and parties are the same

# Key factors that might encourage an interest in voting

#1

If I trusted politicians more

#2

If my vote really made a difference

# Why politicians aren't trusted

The main reason why politicians generally aren't trusted is not keeping promises, followed by politicians earning too much. It was also argued that politicians are out of touch with normal people.

“Us young people have seen through politicians a long time ago - the fact that they make promises at elections that they can't keep later on and that they only say certain things to rate better in the polls.... Young people will trust a politician that speaks the truth, even if we'd rather not hear it... Most of young people are very well educated therefore making it very hard to tell them lies.”

”Politicians should care more about the people. Most of them only act in their own interest and for economic reasons. They save when it comes to Austrians, but not when it comes to them personally. I feel sick thinking about how much they earn - you could almost call it corruption.”

”It's hard to trust them when they don't know anything about normal people and real life.”

“Of course corruption is a big no-go. What's even worse for young people is that politicians make promises and then don't keep them and that they never involve the people.”

# Trustworthy politicians?

When asked to name a “relatively trustworthy” politician, only a handful of participants offered any suggestions. The rationale for mentioning certain politicians here was that they campaign for transparency and they make realistic promises.

”The sad truth is that a lot of politicians don't work for the people and instead make decisions in favour of their sponsors. Just take a closer look at what side jobs some of them have had. The politicians working for the Green Party in Austria fight for transparency - being open about side jobs, etc. That's what makes them trustworthy.”

“In my opinion Reinhold Mitterlehner and Sebastian Kurz are quite trustworthy. They try to only communicate safe information and accomplishable measures that they usually also turn into reality. ”

“To me Mathias Strolz from the NEOS seems very trustworthy because he openly says that we won't be able to finance our pension system in the long run. Unfortunately, I think that's also why they aren't doing too well in the polls.”

# Building Trust in politics (Cont.)

Ideas for how politicians could better connect with younger people and win their trust included telling the truth and keeping promises. Other threads of discussion included looking deeper into matters that affect young people, treating their opponents with respect and using social media or a dedicated discussion platform.

“The best way for politicians to gain more trust is to remain realistic instead of promising us the moon. To tell the truth, even if it hurts.”

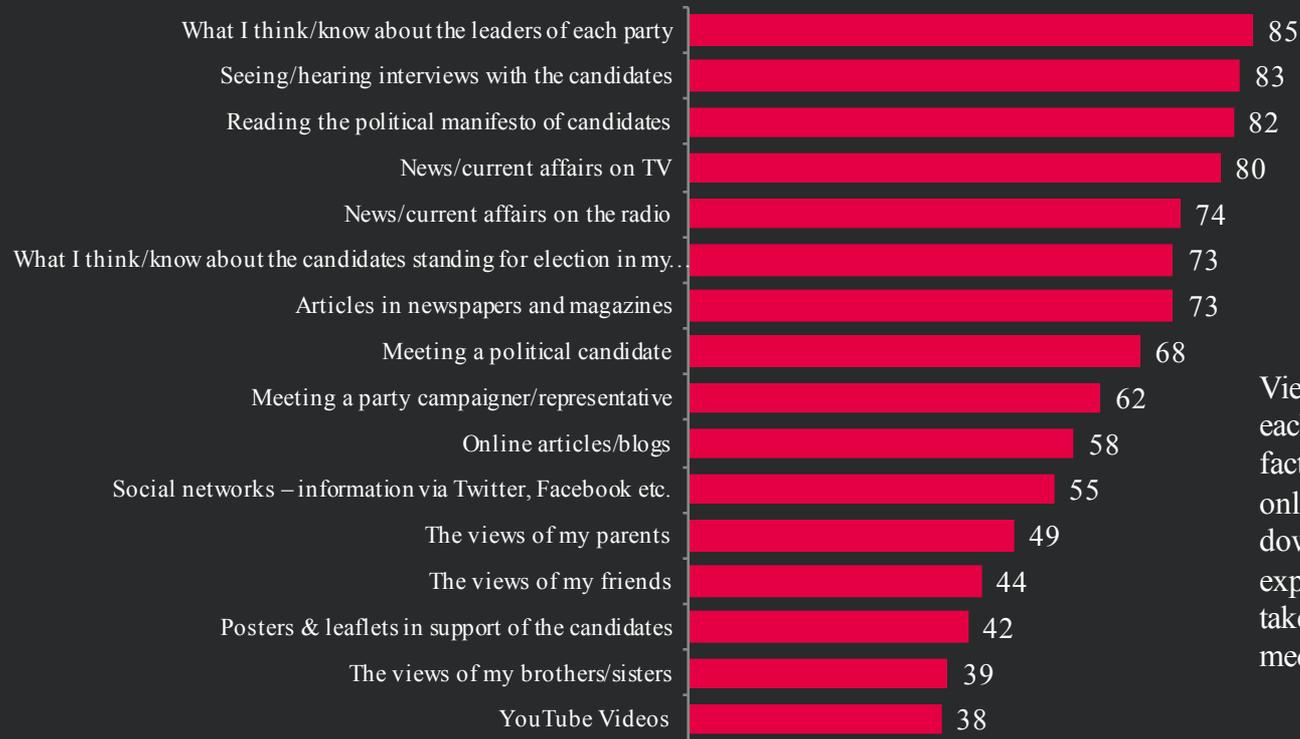
“It would be good for them to treat their opponents with respect.”

”In order to gain more trust, they should look deeper into topics that affect young people. They should create jobs, make cheaper rent possible and support young families - maybe more people would start having children again then.”

“Politicians should use new media such as Facebook, Twitter and so on to connect with younger people.”

“I think politicians should only promise things that they can actually keep, but if they did that, they would lose votes and so they have to keep lying. I think it would be very convenient to have an online platform where young people can voice their concerns. (But only if politicians were actually going to answer and give reasons why those concerns are resolvable/not resolvable).”

# Factors contributing to voting decision (% 'Great Extent' or 'Some Extent')

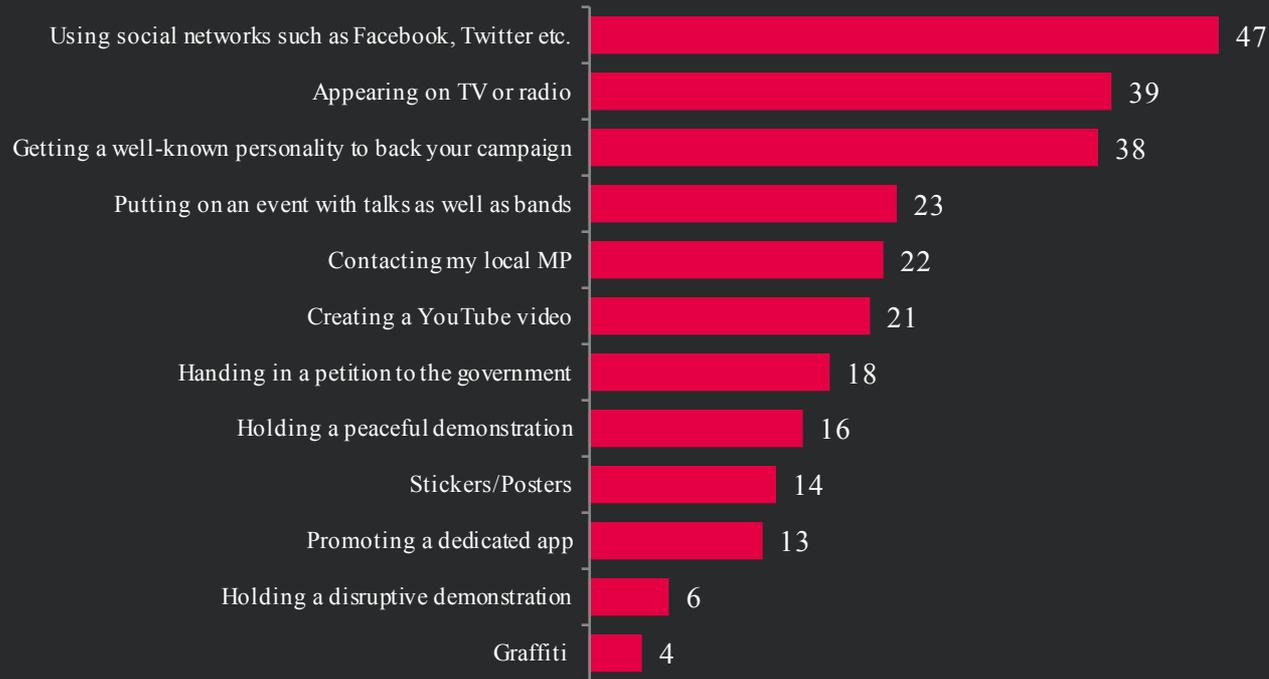


Views about the leaders of each party was seen as the key factor. Social media and other online factors were fairly low down the list as millennials expect the main campaigns to take place using traditional media (TV and radio)

# Means they would use to start a political campaign

(‘extremely useful’ %)

If they were to start their own campaign, however, Austrian millennials would be more likely to focus their efforts on social media



# Preferred message for encouraging more younger people to vote...

50%

“Younger people need to vote - it's their future”

26%

“Voting is your responsibility”

23%

“Voting really does make a difference”

# WHAT WOULD THEY DO DIFFERENTLY?

When we asked them to imagine that they were involved in creating a new political campaign, most people said they would focus on spreading the word via online channels. Other ideas included joining protests and organising flash mobs.

“I would fight for employee rights and to prove that I mean it, I would participate in protests. That would create free publicity and also shows that I and my supporters really mean it.”

“When it comes to mobilising people, you simply have to use social media these days. Radio would be a good way to reach older people or people at work. There should be updates about the work we do every day. Small insights and repetition of our campaign slogan because the more you repeat something, the more it is likely to stick with you.”

“Unlike current campaigns, I would use posters without blatant slogans and make sure that I speak to people respectfully. I would generally reduce posters and focus on other methods such as online advertising, YouTube videos, and in addition to that, get in touch with people directly at events such as flash mobs and open discussions. I think a good way to convince people that a campaign is truthful is to include one's own personality and to explain why one sees things the way one sees them. To use examples and facts to back election goals, such as positive examples from other countries.”

“I would approach the nation and ask to hear their problems, fears and worries. Especially when it comes to younger people. Then I would start a campaign that focuses on the problems, fears and worries that most people have mentioned. Maybe people should have more say in politics. In a pirate party, everybody can make suggestions. People need to feel represented by politicians. I would approach people and talk to them to make them aware that they can really make a change if they join the campaign. To show them that my campaign is serious, I would involve them more. Whether that's talking to them individually or inviting them to a group discussion to discuss the campaign.”

# Poster Campaign

We asked the respondents to work together to develop ideas for posters that would encourage young people to get engaged with politics.

They generally favoured using a friendly, open and plain speaking tone. There were also a few suggestions to use provocative or even confrontational language.

In terms of imagery, many people thought positive images of people – groups of people together or perhaps a young couple – would be a good option. There was some heated debate about the Austrian flag with some people very much in favour of using it for a poster and others saying that the flag - especially the eagle - has right wing connotations.

Here are some more of the top rated suggestions:

It's your Turn!

Together we are strong. So Let's work together.

Because it's possible!

IF you don't do it, nobody will.

Do you care about your future? Then vote for us.

# The Ideal Candidate

When asked what young people imagined the perfect candidate to be like, many people described someone who was, compared to most politicians, more like themselves, especially in terms of age.

“Male, between 30 and 40 from Upper Austria. Dresses sporty, modern. Quiet, likeable personality. Spends his weekends with his family, friends and sports. People like his accessible way of being. He is too generous. I like him because he's like me.”

“Gender shouldn't matter, even though I would prefer a woman as politics is dominated by men.”

“She/he should have a maximum age of 45 years since older politicians make decisions that won't affect them anymore since they will already have retired. Younger candidates are more careful with their decisions.”

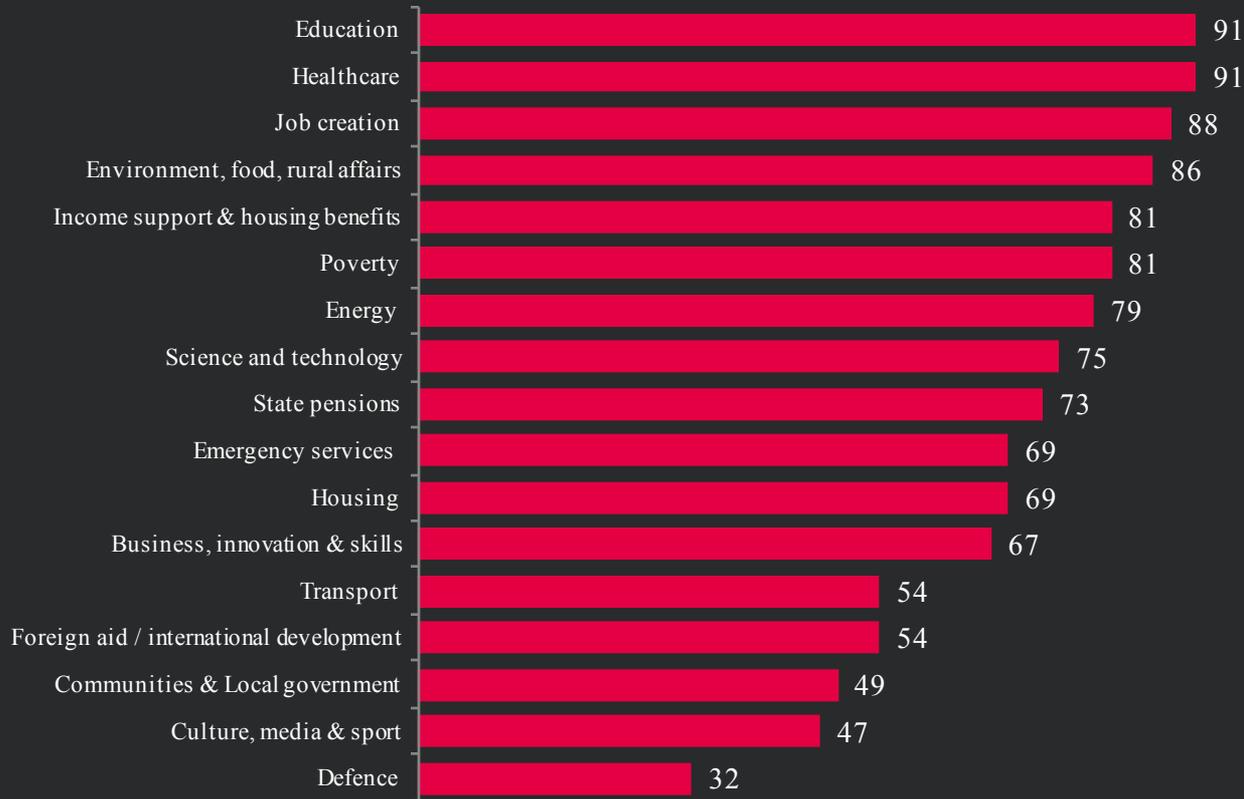
“She should be likeable, family-friendly, consistent and determined and come from a strict, civil background. She should know what it's like to have nothing.”

“Male, about 35 years old from Vienna/Lower Austria. Dressed in casual business style. He is open, cosmopolitan but only to the right amount. Spends his weekends with his family, in a garden or at various events. People value his openness and honesty. Weakness is that he can't keep all promises either. I think this person is great because he could be the neighbour living next door who always helps out when you need something and that everybody trusts!”

# The issues that matter



# High Priority for Public Spending (%)



Education, Healthcare and Job Creation were considered to be the top priorities for government spending.



89%

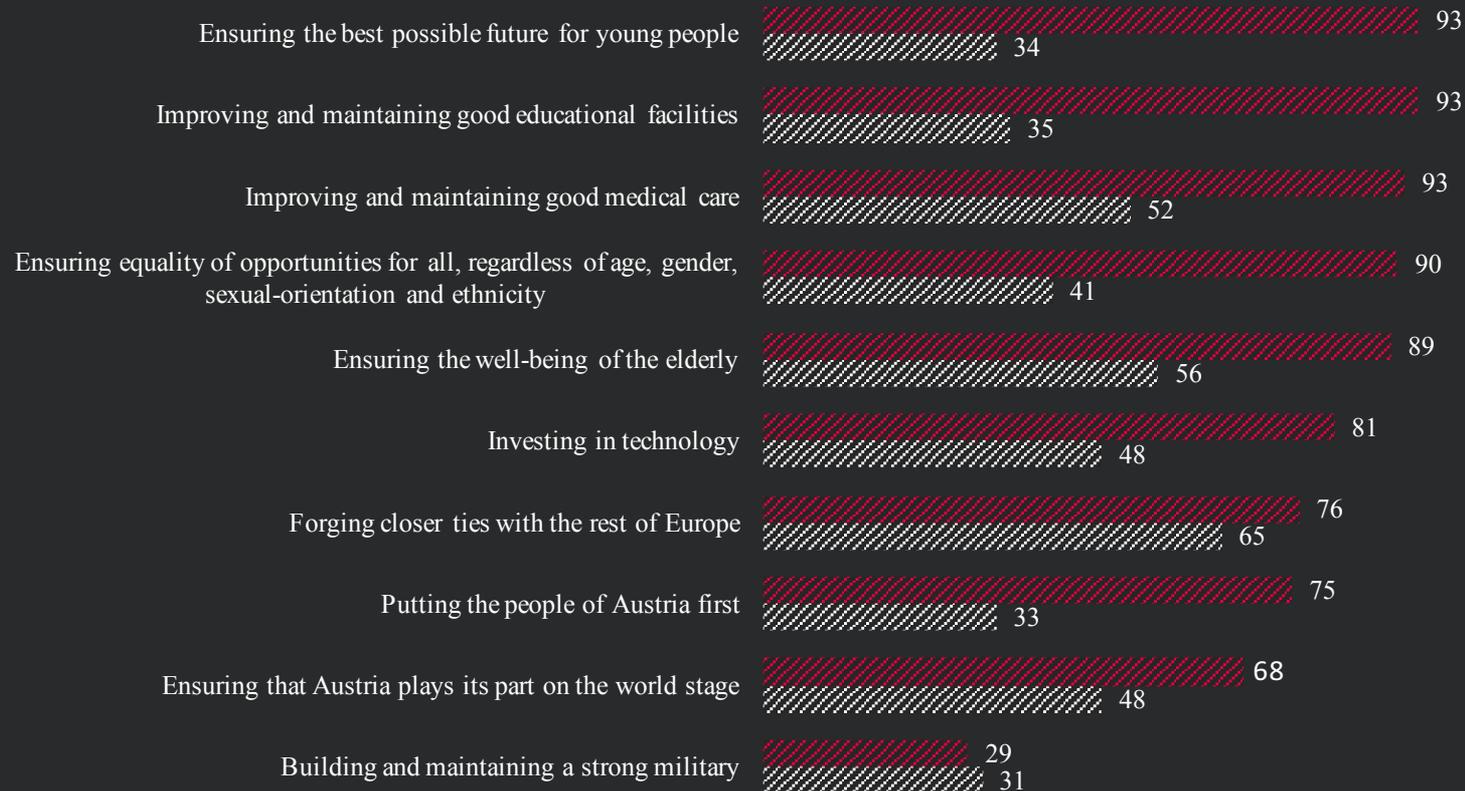
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believed in the importance of equality  
in gender and sexual -orientation in  
society

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# WHAT SHOULD POLITICIANS WORK TOWARDS? (%)

## To what extent do they deliver on the following? (%)



# Immigration

When asked to talk about the issues they think are the most important, many of the discussions were about immigration and the distinctions between economic migrants and refugees. It should be noted that when the community was live (mid September), immigration was one of the main news stories in the press, on TV etc.

“Of course all of these people deserve help, however as things stand today, there should be boundaries. In my opinion, war refugees are more important than economic refugees at the moment. War refugees should be the priority as they need help more urgently. The EU simply doesn't know where to put all these people. Once that issue is solved, we can start thinking about taking economic refugees.”

“If you take a closer look at the latest numbers (July 2015), you'll see that only about 38,000 refugees have applied for asylum so far this year - in comparison to Austria's population (about 9,000,000), that's only about 0,45% of the total population. It's definitely manageable, even if you think ahead and count in all the refugees that will come to Austria until the end of the year. If you take a closer look at the top 5 countries that people are fleeing from, you'll find that most refugees are from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Pakistan - all of them countries where things are far from good.”

“There are a lot of people from countries such as Romania, Macedonia and the former Yugoslavia that apply for asylum even though their countries are safe.”

”I can understand where all the envy and hate is coming from. I know Austrian families that can't afford anything – sometimes not even food. No one wants to help them. Refugees get these things through donations.”

# education

Another key theme was the education system. It was suggested a few times that education system is out of date and needs reform. However, it was noted that it's important to make these changes carefully as a badly implemented policy affects the whole generation. It was also suggested that politics should be added to the school curriculum.

“I feel like the structures of the Austrian education system are still from the 19th century and haven't been updated since. Changing the education system should be our first priority. Schools should concentrate on each student's talents and develop them. That includes cognitive, athletic, artistic, emotional and social talents.”

“Our biggest problem at the moment is the new "Zentralmatura" (A-Levels). No one talks about the fact that almost half of the pupils didn't pass the new exams - and it's a trend that's been happening all over Austria. Improvements should be made without using pupils as guinea pigs.”

“What makes education important to me is that it helps you form an interest in issues such as politics. I was only 16 when I was allowed to vote for the first time, but didn't feel like I knew enough to cast a vote. By studying law, I got a good overview of how our political system works. Who can do what, when, how and where. That's why I feel like a class on politics should be taught in school.”

# JOBS

Unemployment and job prospects was the third key theme. This issue was often linked to the immigration debate.

“The most important issue at the moment is the high unemployment rate. A lot of young people don't even get a chance to prove themselves while it's also very hard for older people to find new jobs. The right education is an important factor and feels like some people have the wrong qualifications.”

“Austria currently has the highest unemployment rate since 1945 and some parties always purposefully blame certain groups for the situation: one moment it's the unemployed themselves, then the migrants, then Russia and now the hate is towards refugees. Some media outlets even help those politicians.”

“I know a lot of families who don't have anything and sometimes can't even afford to buy food. Refugees get so much from donations (mobile phones, baby carriages, food, etc). I know a family that has three children and couldn't afford to pay for the heating last winter. I don't understand why no one wants to help them. I tried getting help from the government, but no one wants to help. It's awful. I'm grateful for everything I have. I don't lead a luxurious life but I can care for my family and don't go hungry”

# Not Sharing political views online

When we asked if they felt able to say or do anything about those issues, there was an interesting thread of discussion around sharing (or more often not sharing) views about political issues online. Concerns included not wanting to start fights with their friends and the fact that social media posts are 'on record' for many years.

“I never share my political views on social media. No matter what direction. The problem is that everybody is so convinced of their opinions that it only leads to fights. That's also why my friends and I never talk about who we vote for and what our views are. Especially on social media everything gets archived for a very long time and you never know how it's going to lead back to you one day. Unless you're right in the middle, everything else seems wrong to society these days.”

“Someone I know posted his "negative" opinion on Facebook and was sued immediately. Nothing happened in the end since he didn't mention anyone personally, but it's still very scary. Our true opinions, especially those against immigration, will get us in trouble.”

# Politicians / Political parties

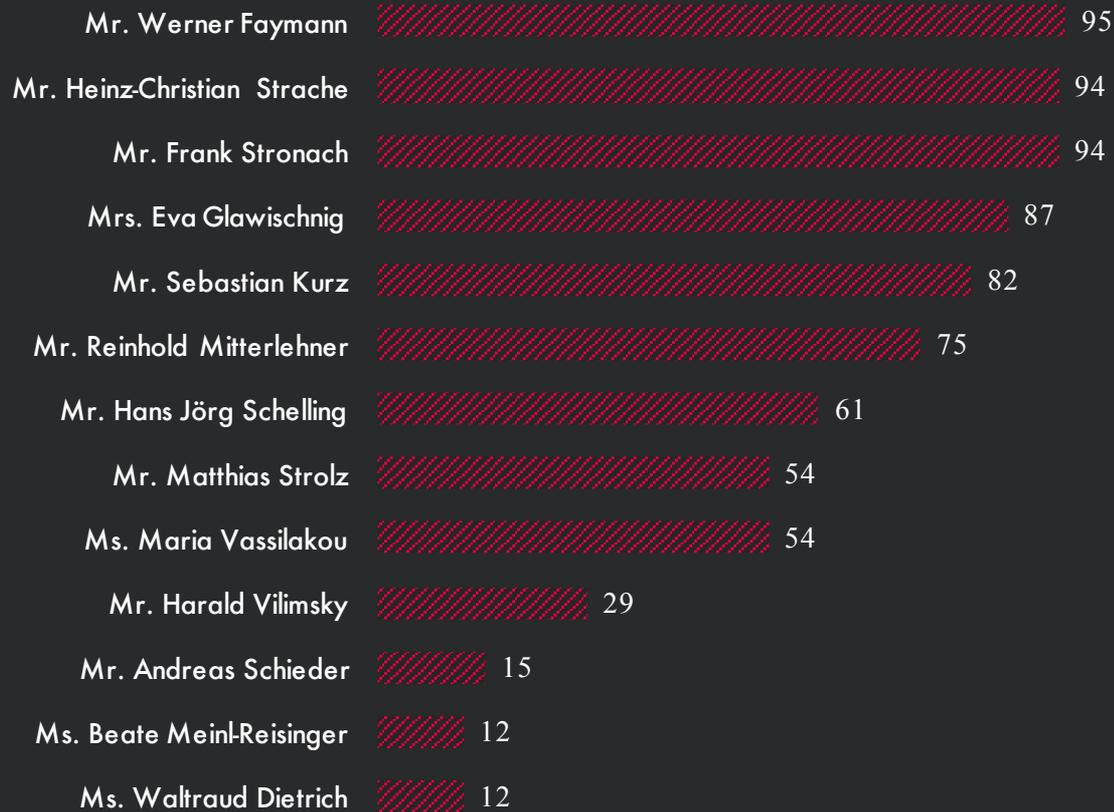


# Awareness of political parties

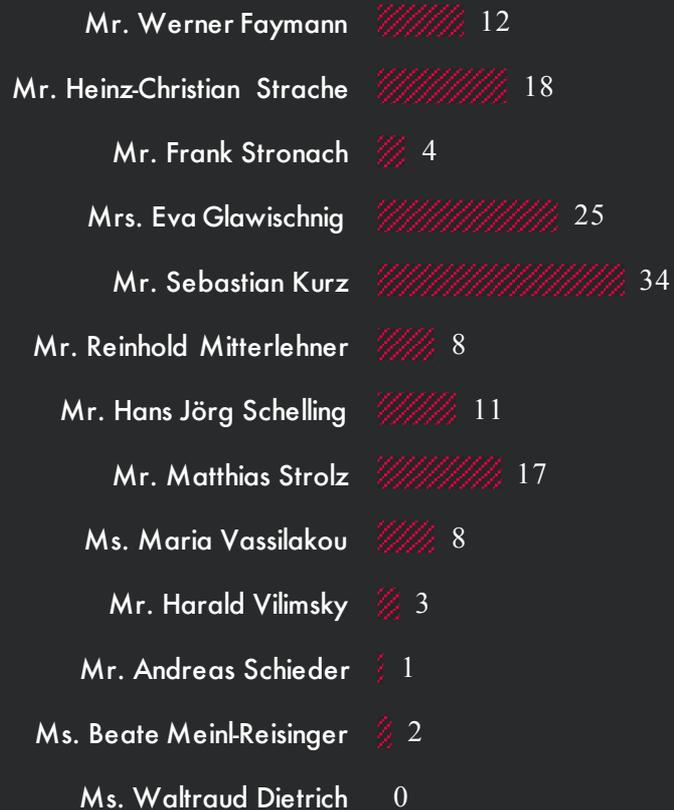


Awareness was fairly high for all the top parties

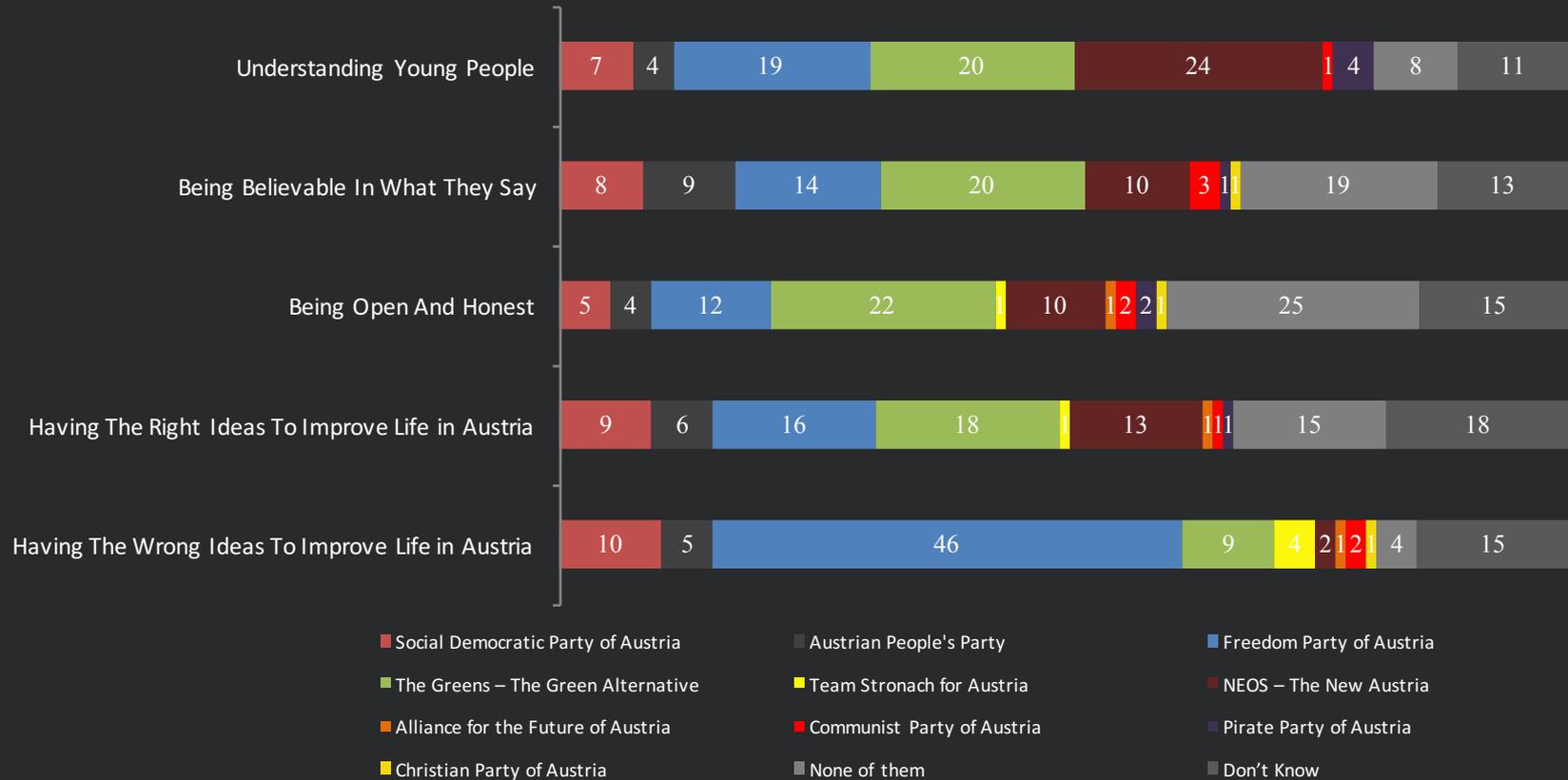
# Awareness of politicians (%)



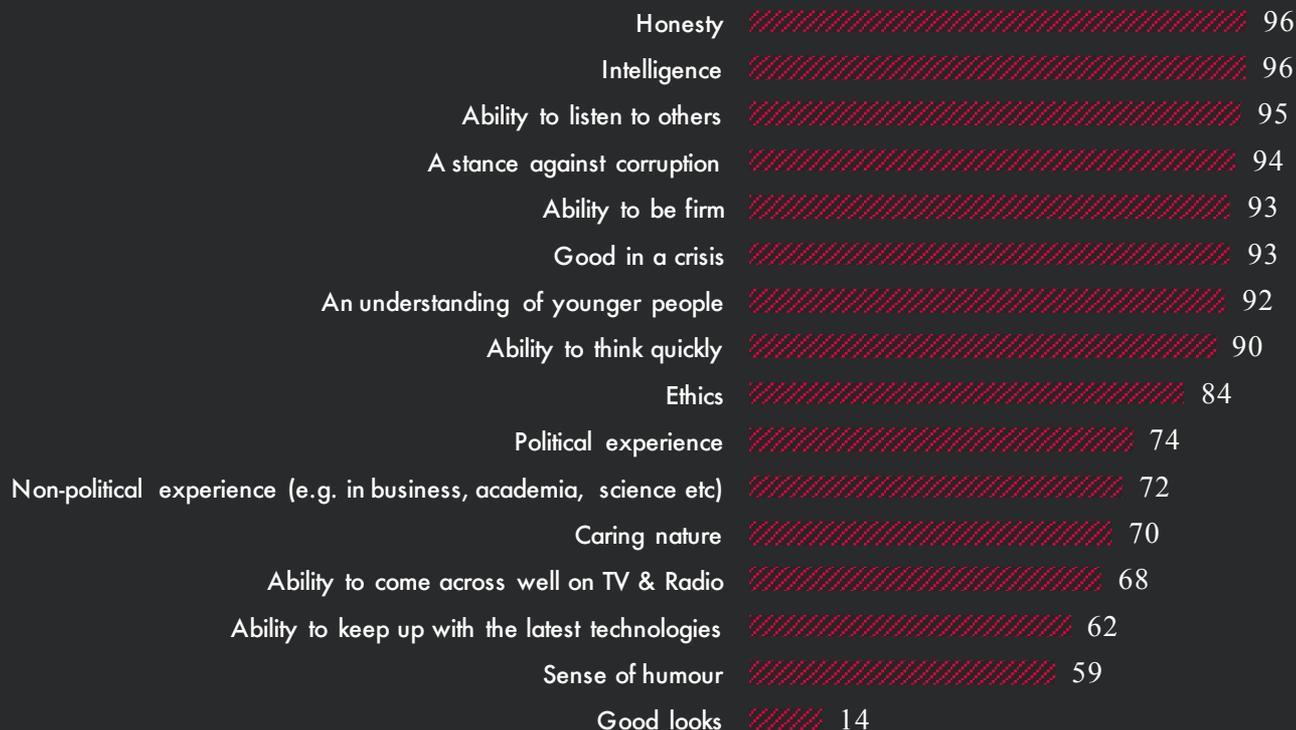
# Proportion who like each politician



# Which party scores the highest for...

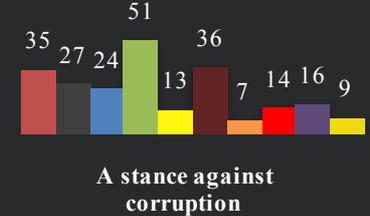
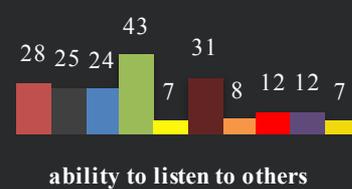
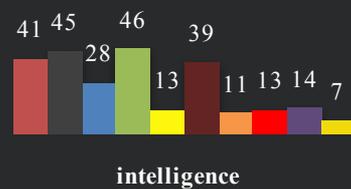
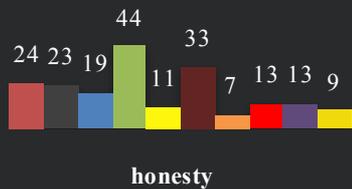


# Important qualities for an elected politician (%)



# Qualities by political party

Possess this quality to a great deal / some extent (%)

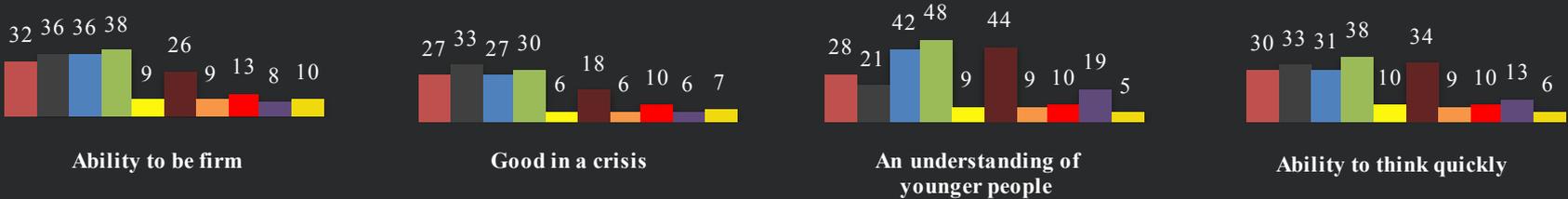


None of the parties scored particularly highly for the top four most important qualities. The Green Party was the clear winner for honesty and having a stance against corruption.

Base: those aware of that party

# Qualities by political party

Possess this quality to a great deal / some extent (%)

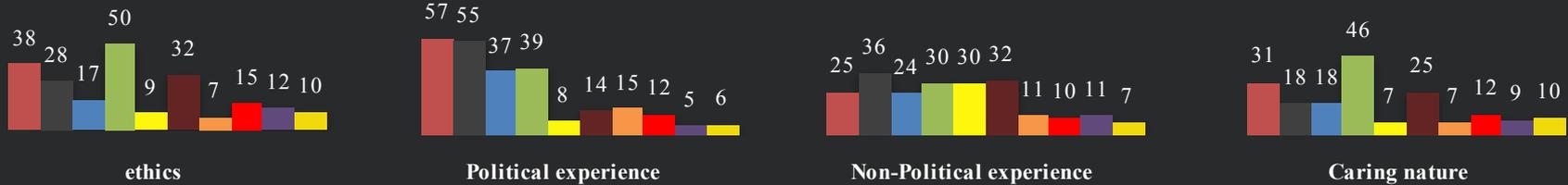


The Austrian People's Party (Övp) was thought to be the best in terms of being "Good in a crisis" – despite having a relatively low score of 33%. The Green Party had the top ranking for having an "understanding of younger people."

Base: those aware of that party

# Qualities by political party

Possess this quality to a great deal / some extent (%)

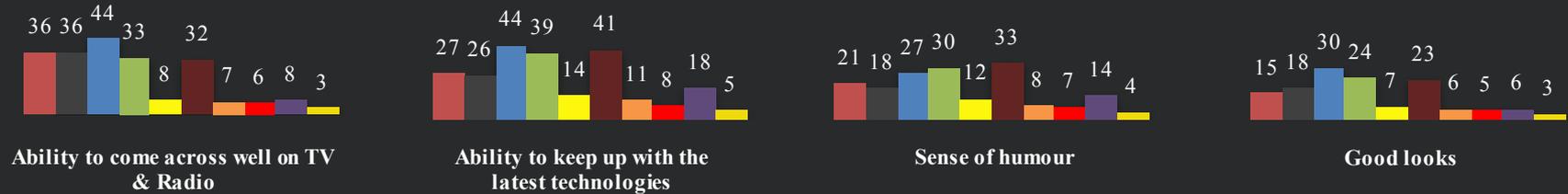


The social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) were well ahead in terms of “political experience” but the main parties were much closer in terms of “non-political experience.” The Green Party are considered to be the most ethical.

Base: those aware of that party

# Qualities by political party

Possess this quality to a great deal / some extent (%)



The Freedom Party (FPÖ) was ahead for 3 of the 4 qualities that were considered to be the least important (see slide 48).

Base: those aware of that party

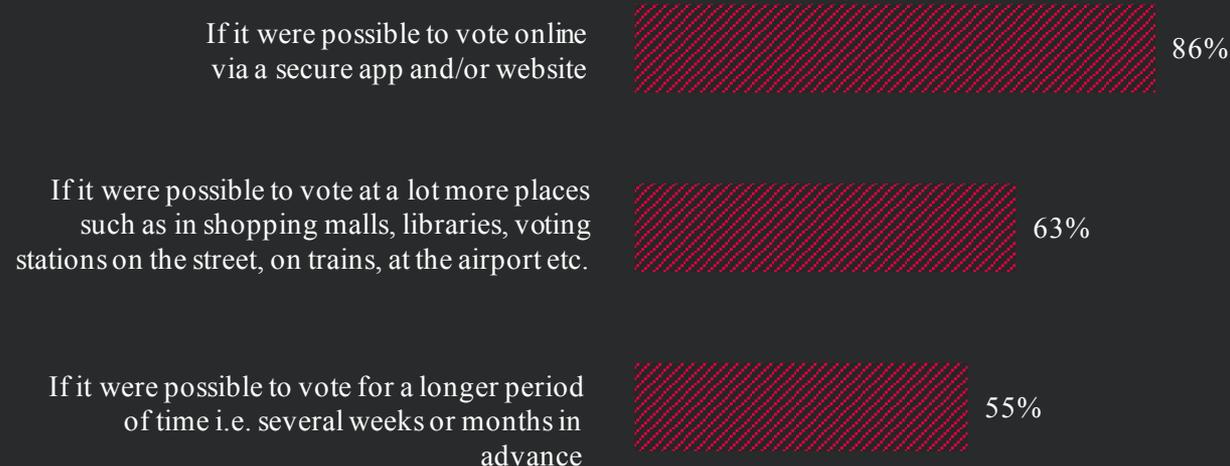
# Electoral reform



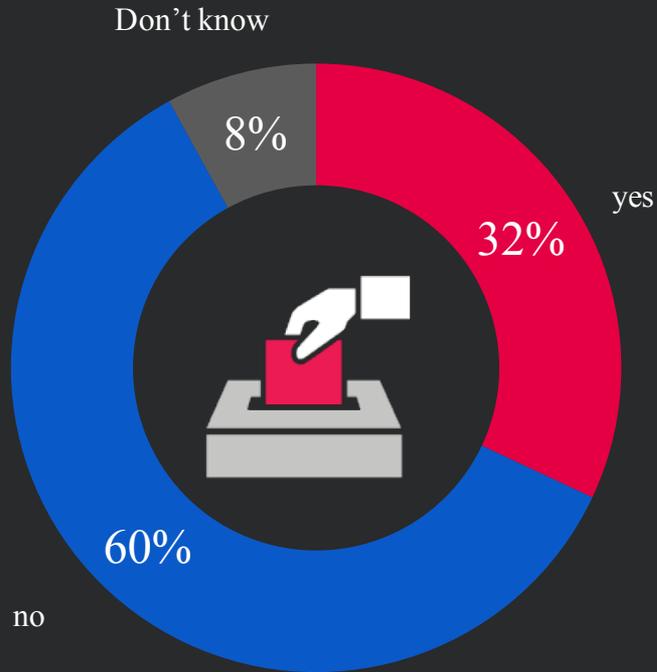
# What would encourage more people to vote?

(% 'Very significantly encourage...' or 'Would go some way to encouraging...')

**YOUNG Austrians SHOW GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE VOTING TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION. THERE IS ALSO fairly strong SUPPORT FOR EXTENDING THE LOCATIONS WHERE ONE CAN VOTE AND FOR PROLONGING ELECTIONS.**



# Should it be made compulsory to vote?



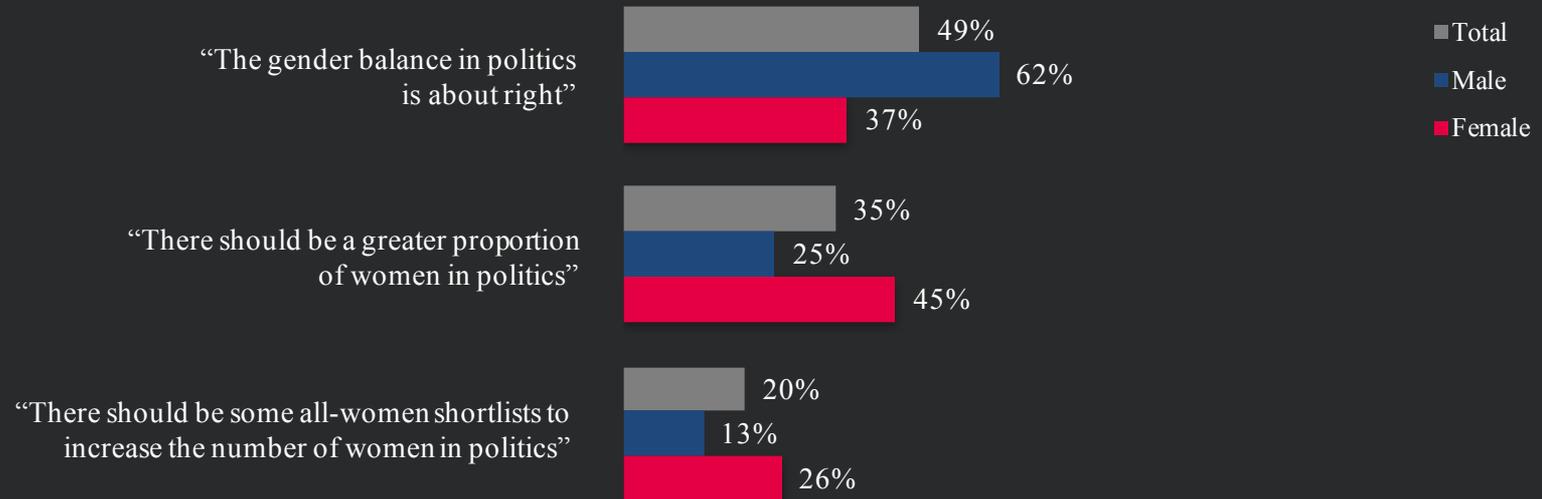
# 10%

Of those who said they would not vote if there was an election tomorrow said 'yes' - voting should be made compulsory

# Women in politics

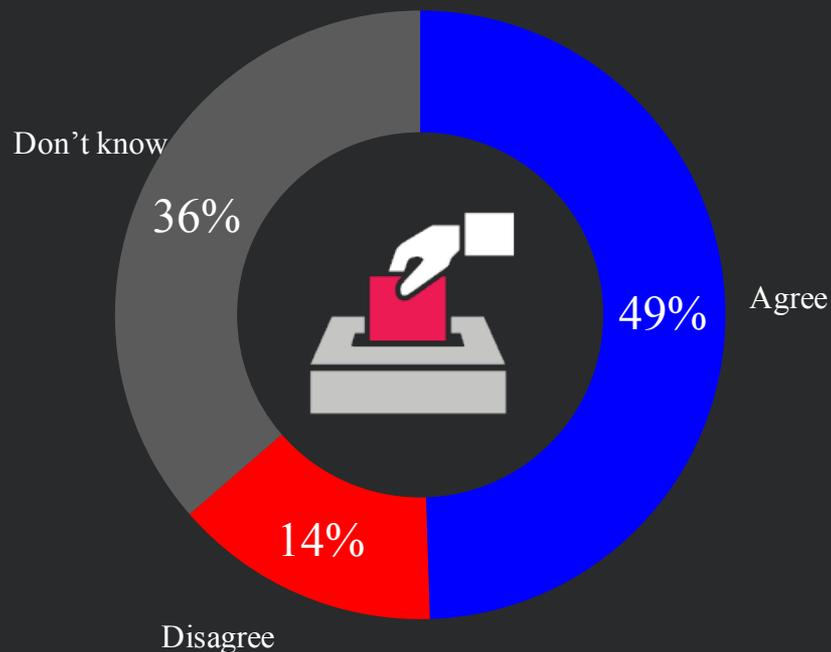
(% who agree with each statement)

**62% of Austrian men feel that the gender balance in politics is ‘about right’, compared to 37% of Austrian women.**  
**Also, there is generally very little support among millennials for all-women electoral lists.**



# Investing in Young People

‘Compared to other European countries, Austria invests less in the future of its young people’ (Net figures)



**16%**  
Of those surveyed  
**strongly agreed** with  
this statement

# Hindering their future

To what extent do you think that the following are damaging the future for young people in Austria?

There were also significant levels of concern at the current levels of investment in education and regarding environmental protection

