Introduction to Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

Sessions 3+4
Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

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Agenda

Day 1

- The political system of Germany

- The political system of Austria

- The economic development by comparison

- Germany and Austria in the European Union

Day 2

Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

- Most important developments in recent years

- Parliamentary elections in 2017: Campaigns, results, coalitions

Seminar paper

Essay / seminar paper

- 3000 words (+/- 10 %)
- Deadline: April 30, 2018
- Submit to the system
- Topics:
  - The refugee issue since 2015
  - East-west differences in Germany
  - Key institutions of German and Austrian politics
  - The electoral campaign(s) in 2017

# Seminar paper

Essays

Writing style:

- Clarity trumps!
- Get rid of words that do not change the content of a sentence
- Avoid "gambling words" (obviously, probably, certainly, undoubtedly)
- Use active voice!
- Use short sentence

Have a clear structure (title, intro, main part, conclusion)
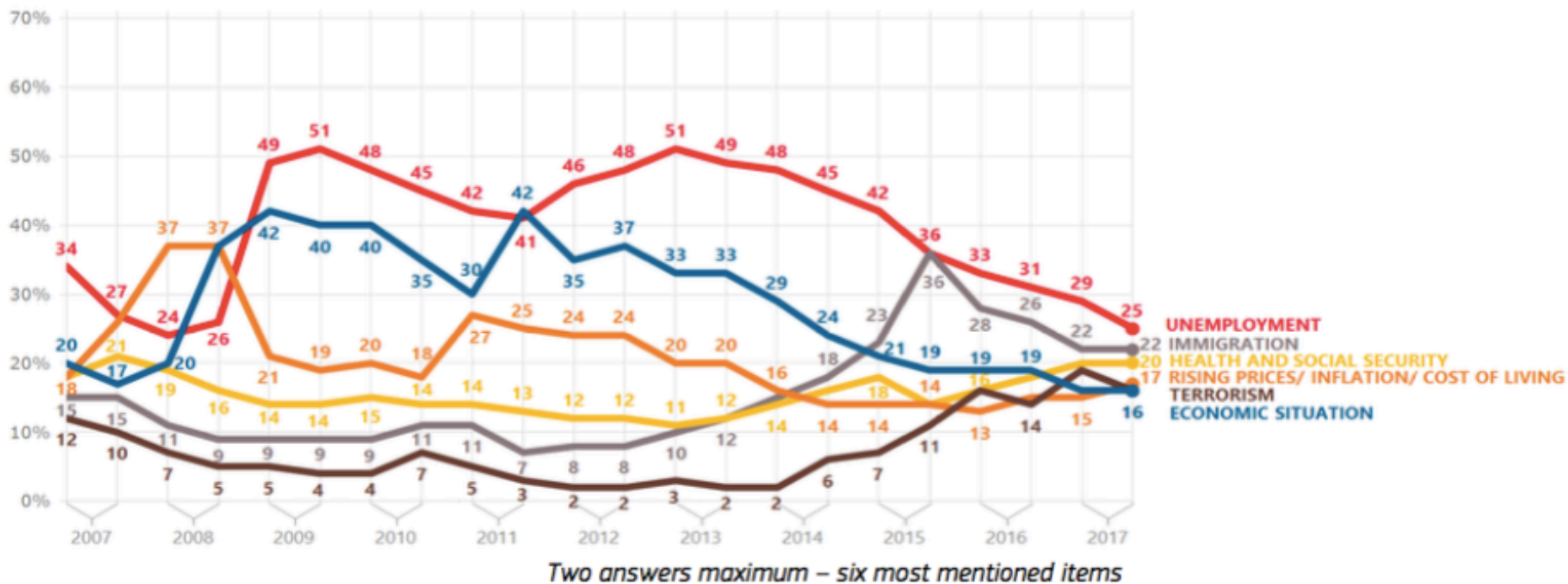
Documentation (give references)

→ You need to make reading your paper as easy as possible
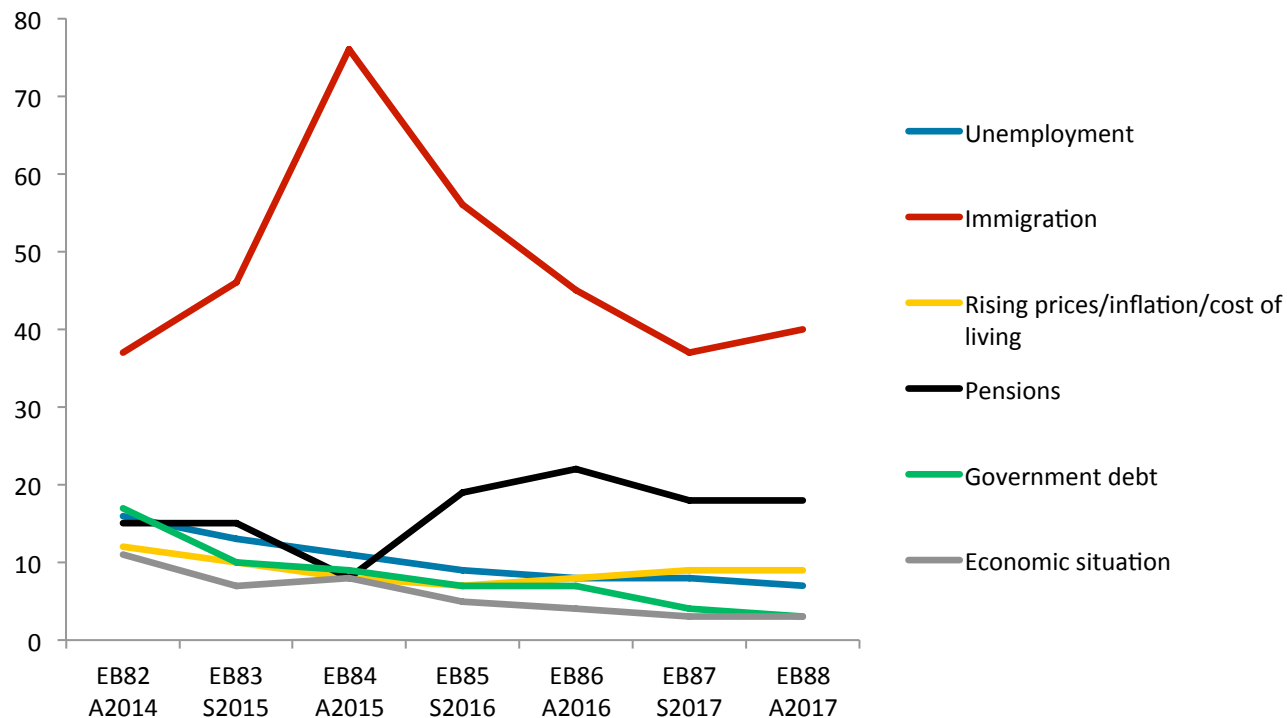
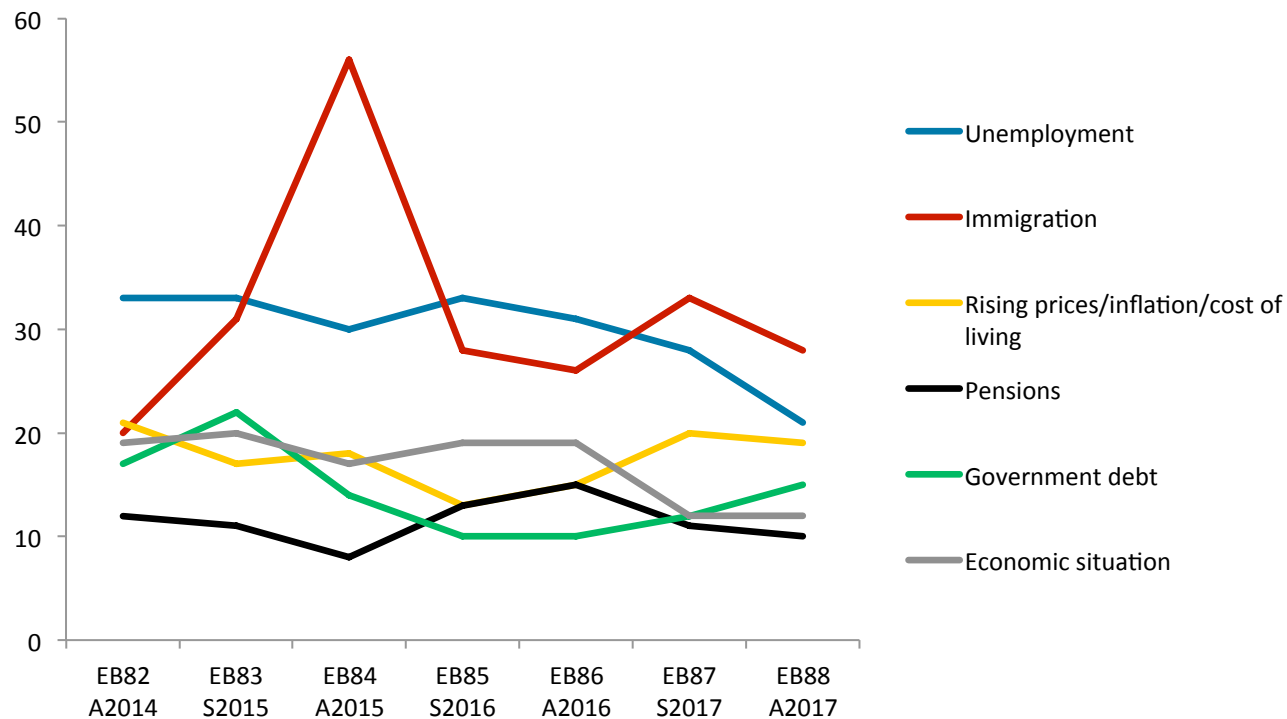# Citizens' main concerns at European level

Two answers maximum – six most mentioned items
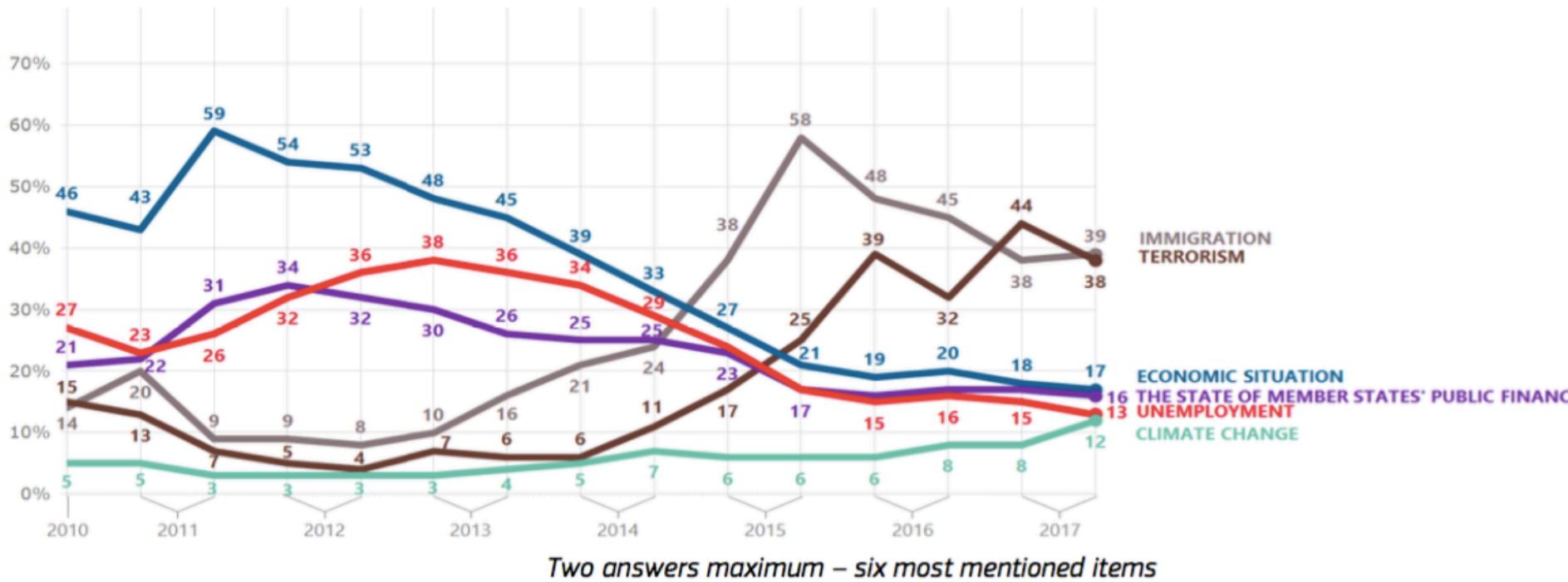
Citizens' main concerns at national level

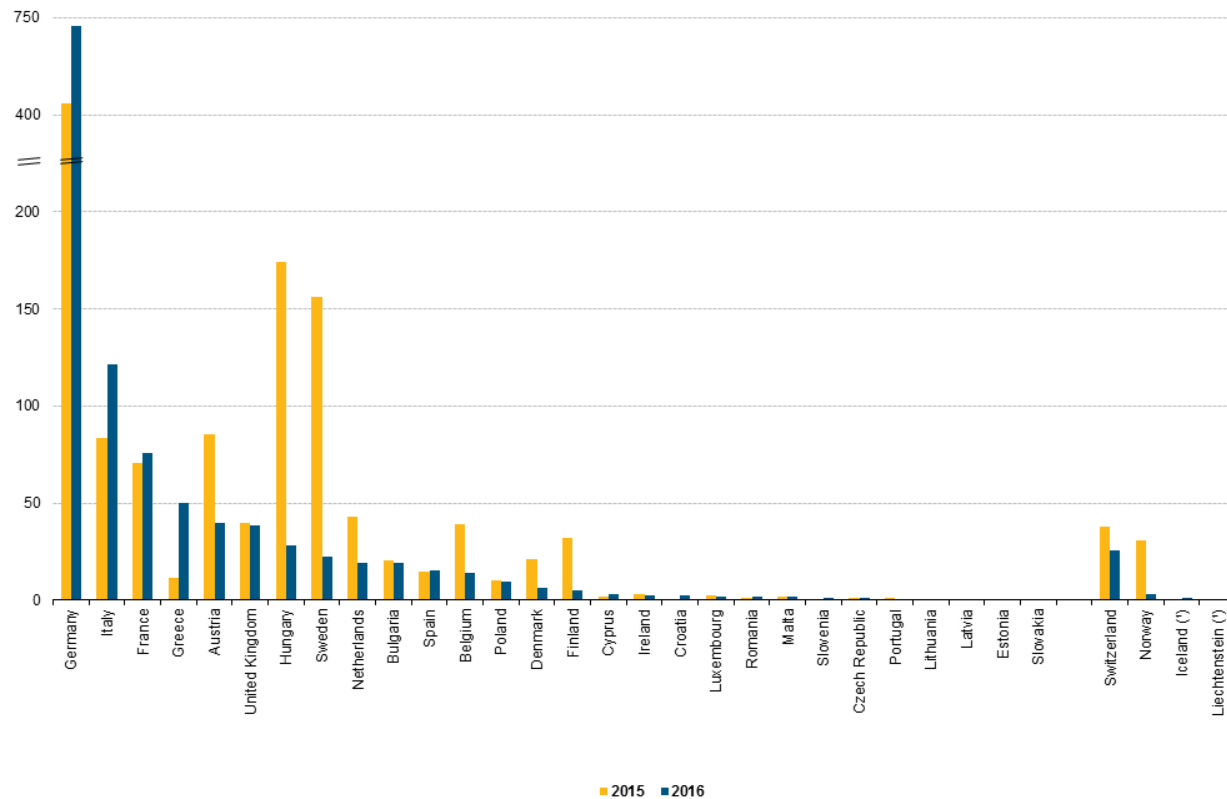QA3a   What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?
(% - EU)

Two answers maximum – six most mentioned items

Citizens' concerns about immigration on the national level in Germany

Legend:
- Unemployment
- Immigration
- Rising prices/inflation/cost of living
- Pensions
- Government debt
- Economic situation

Citizens' concerns about immigration on the national level in Austria

Source: Eurobarometer (http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm)

Number of (non-EU) asylum seekers in the EU (2015-2016, thousands of first time applicants)
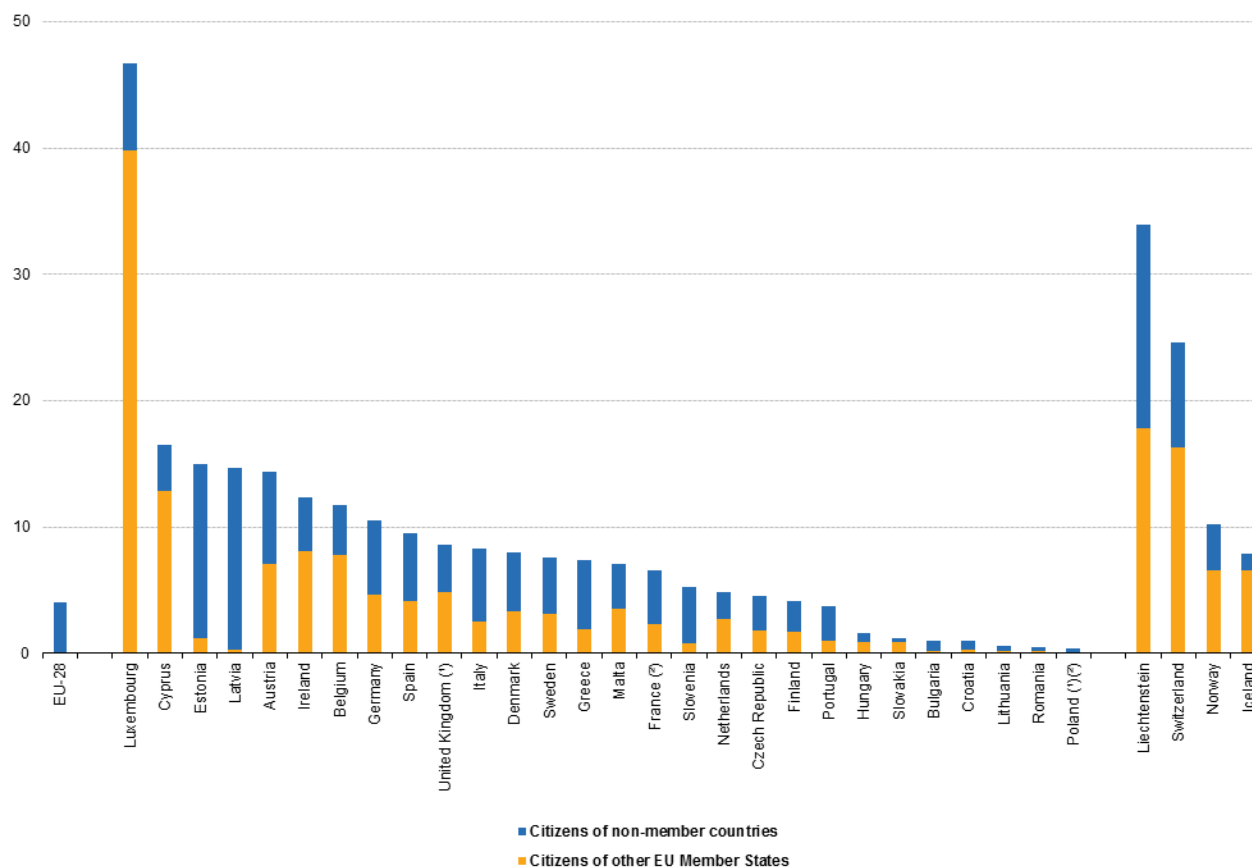

Note: the y-axis is interrupted with a different interval above the interruption from that below it.
(*) 2015: not available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_asyappctza)

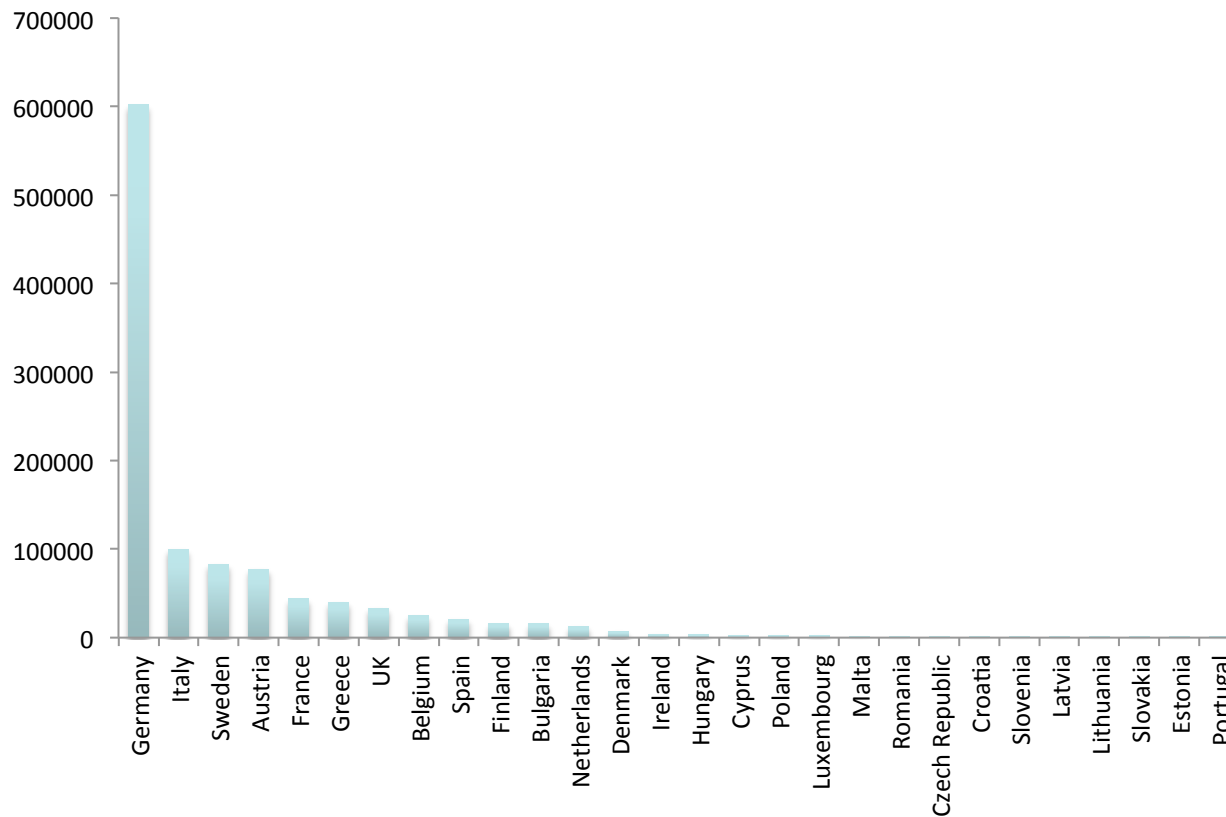# Share of non-nationals in the resident population, 1 January 2016 (%)

(¹) Estimate.
(²) Provisional.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop1ctz)

Persons subject of asylum applications pending at the end of 2016

Political Responses in Austria and Germany

- 4 September 2015: Austria (Faymann) and Germany (Merkel) announce that migrants would be allowed to cross the border from Hungary into Austria and onward to Germany.

- 14 September 2015: Austria (following Germany) instituted border controls (Austrian Army) of its own at the border with Hungary.

- 28 October 2015: Austria decided to build a fence along its border with Slovenia (91 km) to "be able to control the migrants in an orderly manner" (Minister of the Interior Johanna Mikl-Leitner)

→ Snow-ball effect leading to the official closure of the Western Balkan route

- 20 January 2016: Austria announced it would limit the number of asylum applicants to 37,500 in each of the next four years

- 19 February 2016: Austria started putting a daily cap of 80 asylum seekers allowed to enter the country to apply for Austrian asylum

Polarization of the immigration issue

- New year's eve in Cologne (2015) as the tipping point?

Polarization

- Welcome culture vs. cultural protection?

Example I: Train of Hope Vienna

- Grass roots associations starting in August 2015 (-December 2015)
- Since October 2015: officially registered association
- Aim: "welcoming refugees in a human, non-bureaucratic and open-minded way"
- Volunteers providing refugees with food, cloths, information, WIFI and medical support at Vienna central railway station, Westbahnhof, (later from Nickelsdorf – Salzburg)
- Setting-up infrastructure needed (with other NGOs and Austrian Federal Railways)
- Future projects on integration planned
- → Private initiative replacing public authorities

Example II: Pegida

- Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident
- German nationalist, anti-Islam, far-right political movement
- Founded in Dresden in October 2014
- Against immigration and Lügenpresse (lying press)
- Accuse authorities of not enforcing existing laws
- Links to NPD, AFD and Liberal Direct Democratic People's Party (founded in June 2016)
- Participants from the right-wing sector, hooligans and concerned citizens
- Motivation: dissatisfaction with the political situation (54%), "Islam, Islamism and Islamisation" (23%), criticism of the media and the public (20%), and reservations regarding asylum seekers and migrants (15%)
- Male-dominated group with a relatively high level of education
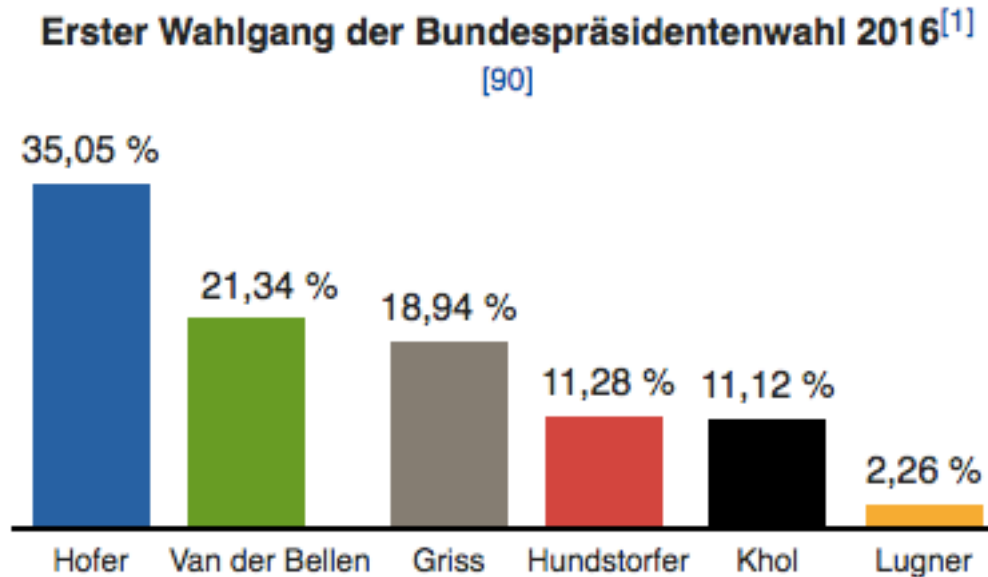- → Channelling general disappointment based on social insecurity and xenophobic attitudes

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

First round: April 24, 2016

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria
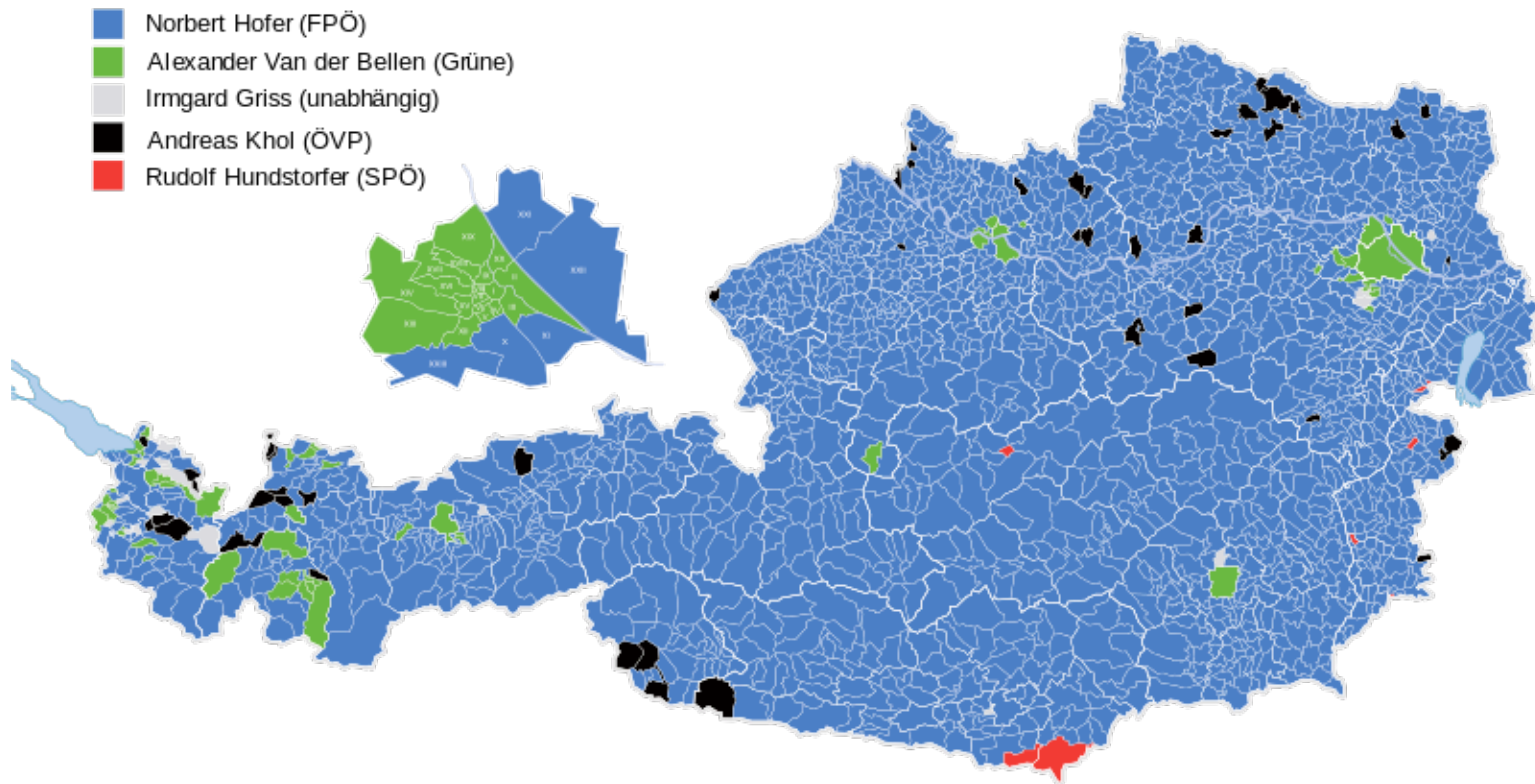
First round: April 24, 2016
→ Turnout 68.8 %

Erster Wahlgang der Bundespräsidentenwahl 2016[1]
[90]

Hofer	Van der Bellen	Griss	Hundstorfer	Khol	Lugner
35,05 %	21,34 %	18,94 %	11,28 %	11,12 %	2,26 %

→ Chancellor Faymann steps back

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

Ergebnisse der Bundespräsidentenwahl am 24. April 2016 (1. Runde): Mehrheiten in den Gemeinden

- Norbert Hofer (FPÖ)
- Alexander Van der Bellen (Grüne)
- Irmgard Griss (unabhängig)
- Andreas Khol (ÖVP)
- Rudolf Hundstorfer (SPÖ)

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

Second round: May 22, 2016
→ Turnout 72,25 %

But: Constitutional courts annuls the election
→ Violation of the electoral law (postal ballot)

50,35 % 49,65 %

Van der Bellen   Hofer

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

Ergebnisse der Bundespräsidentenwahl am 22. Mai 2016 (2. Runde): Mehrheiten in den Gemeinden

Norbert Hofer (FPÖ)
Alexander Van der Bellen (Grüne)
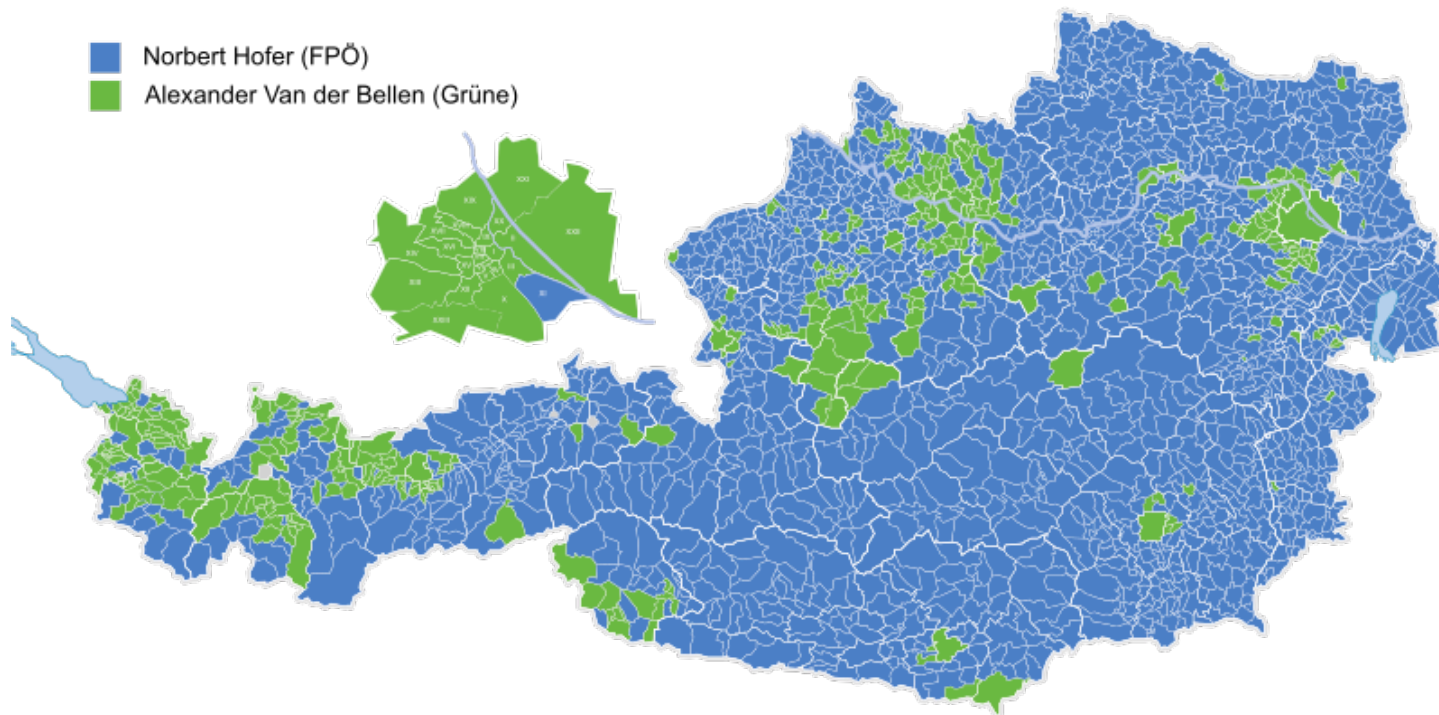
The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

Second round (2): October 16, 2016

But: issue with postal voting

→ Envelops defect

→ Postpone the election

The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria
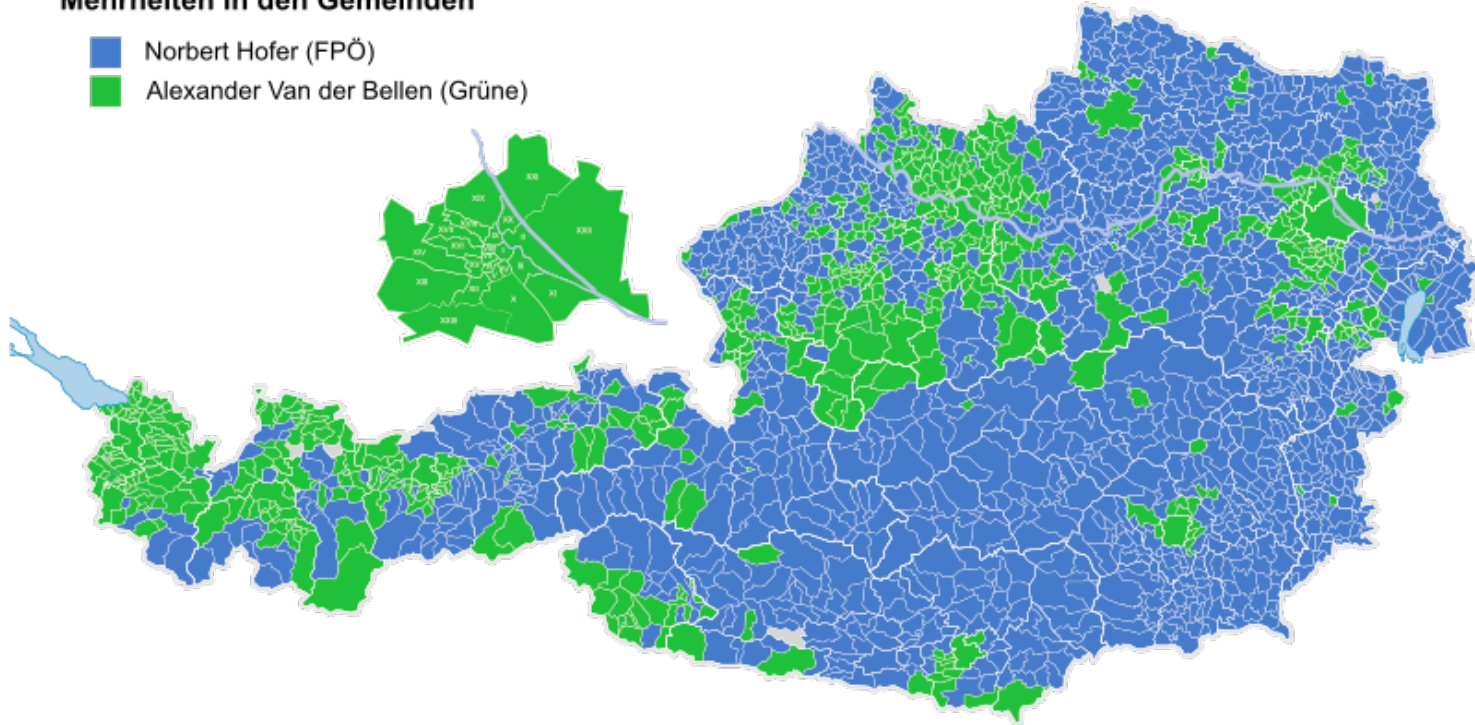
Second round (3): December 4, 2016
→ Turnout 74,21 %

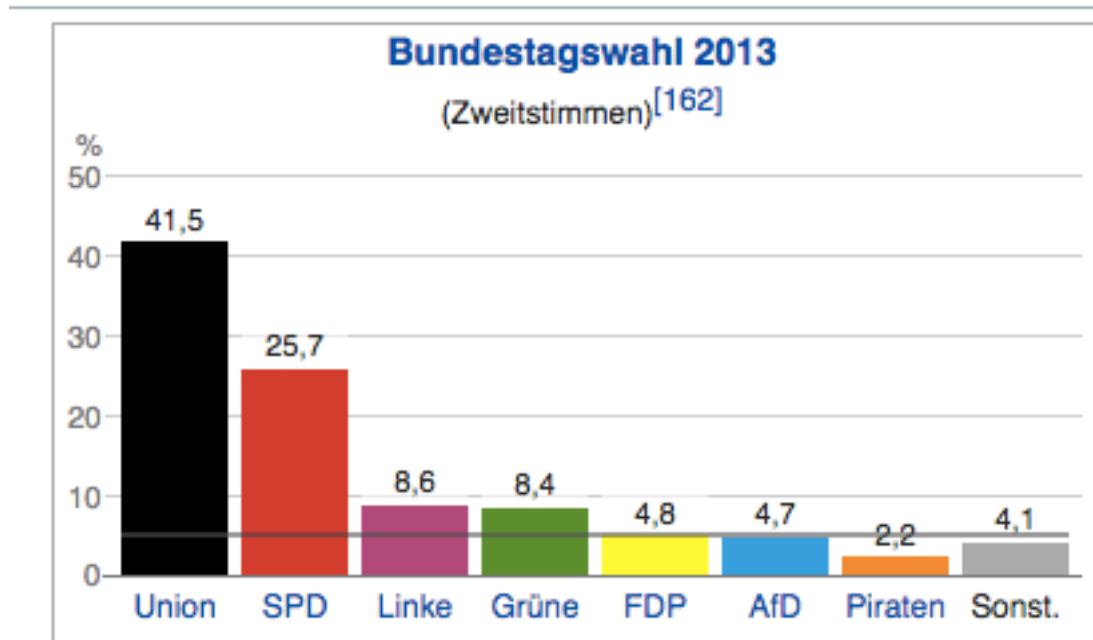# The presidential "voting marathon" in Austria

Ergebnisse der Bundespräsidentenwahl am 4. Dezember 2016 (Wiederholung der 2. Runde):
Mehrheiten in den Gemeinden

- Norbert Hofer (FPÖ)
- Alexander Van der Bellen (Grüne)

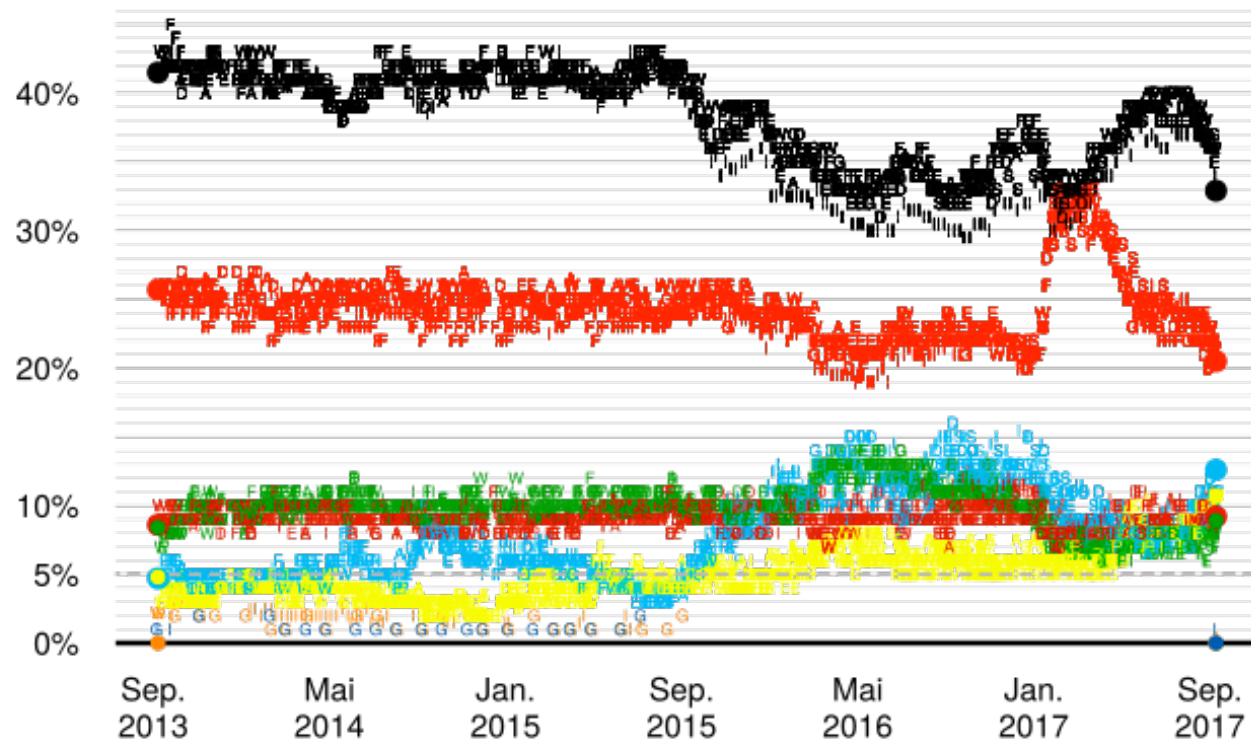# Parliamentary election in Germany in 2017

AFD spot

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRoHZ-QKwhk

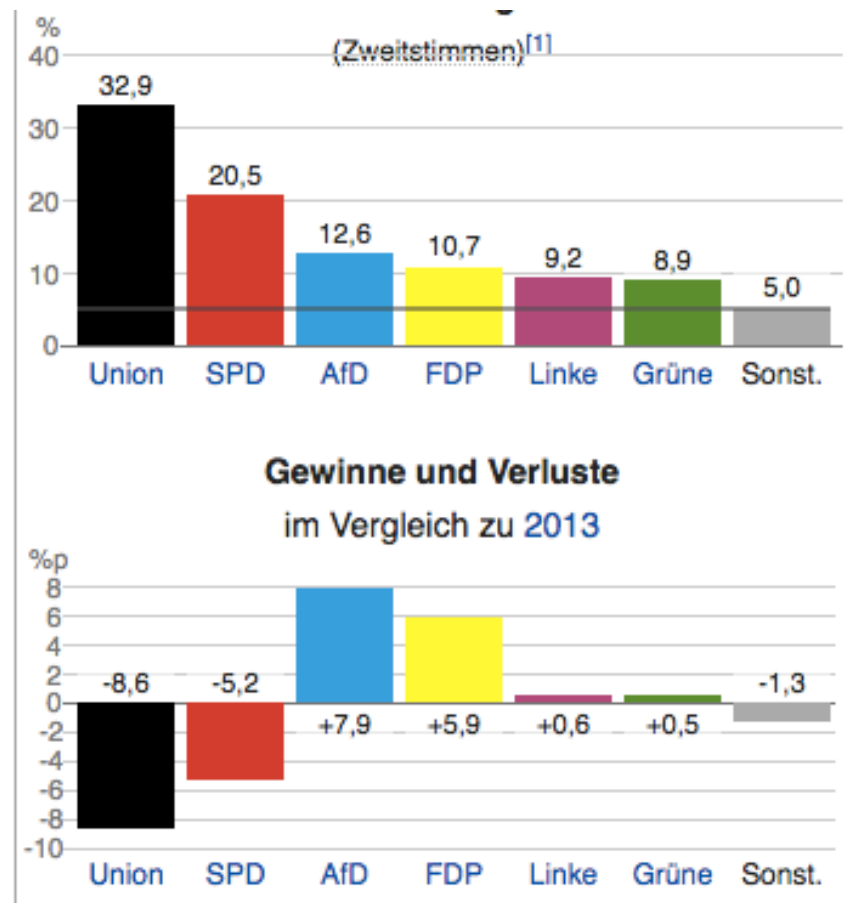# The result of the German election in 2017
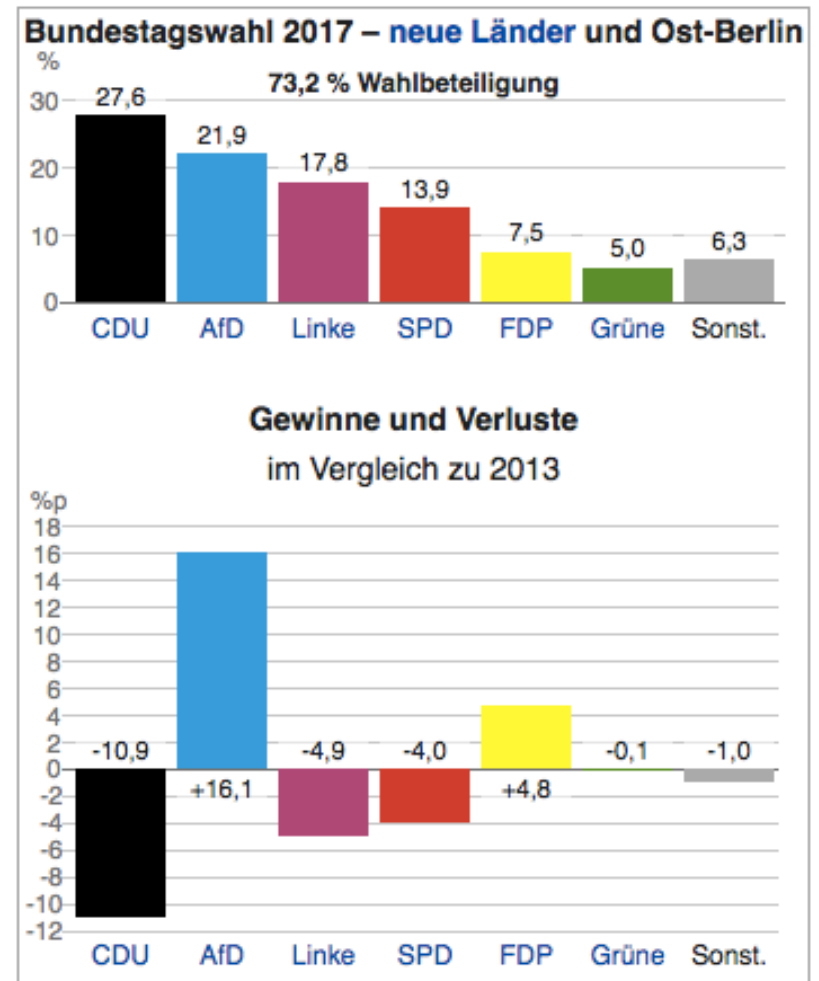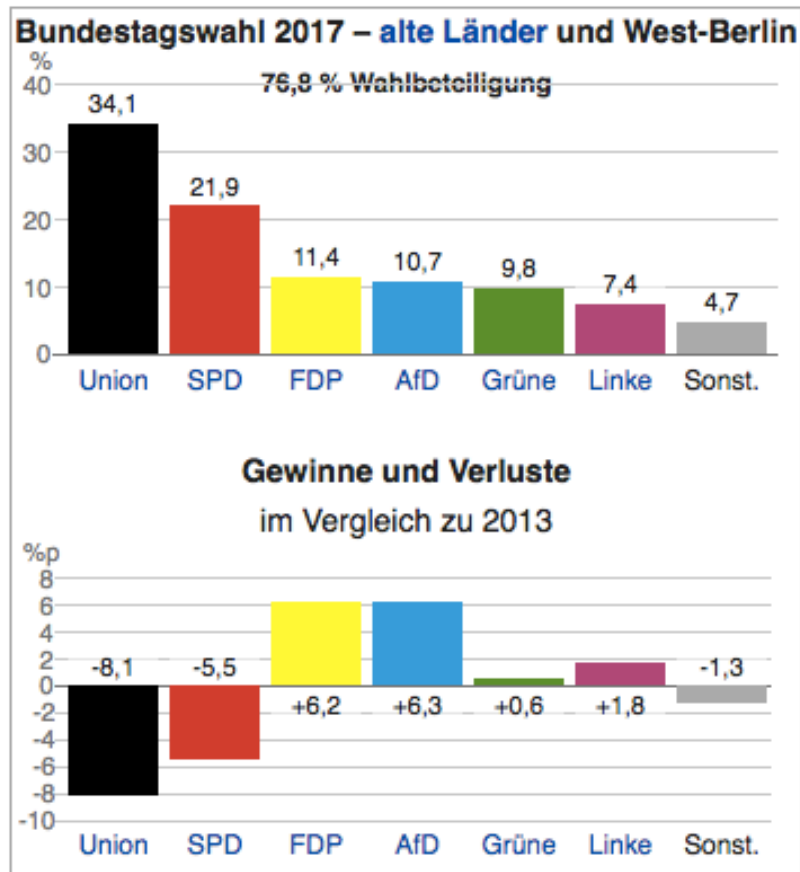

Sonntagsfragen zur Bundestagswahl

The result of the German election in 2017

- ▪ "Boring" election campaign
- ▪ One TV debate between the main candidates (from the governing parties)
- ▪ AFD tries to be provocative + victimisation
- → Great challenge to the established parties

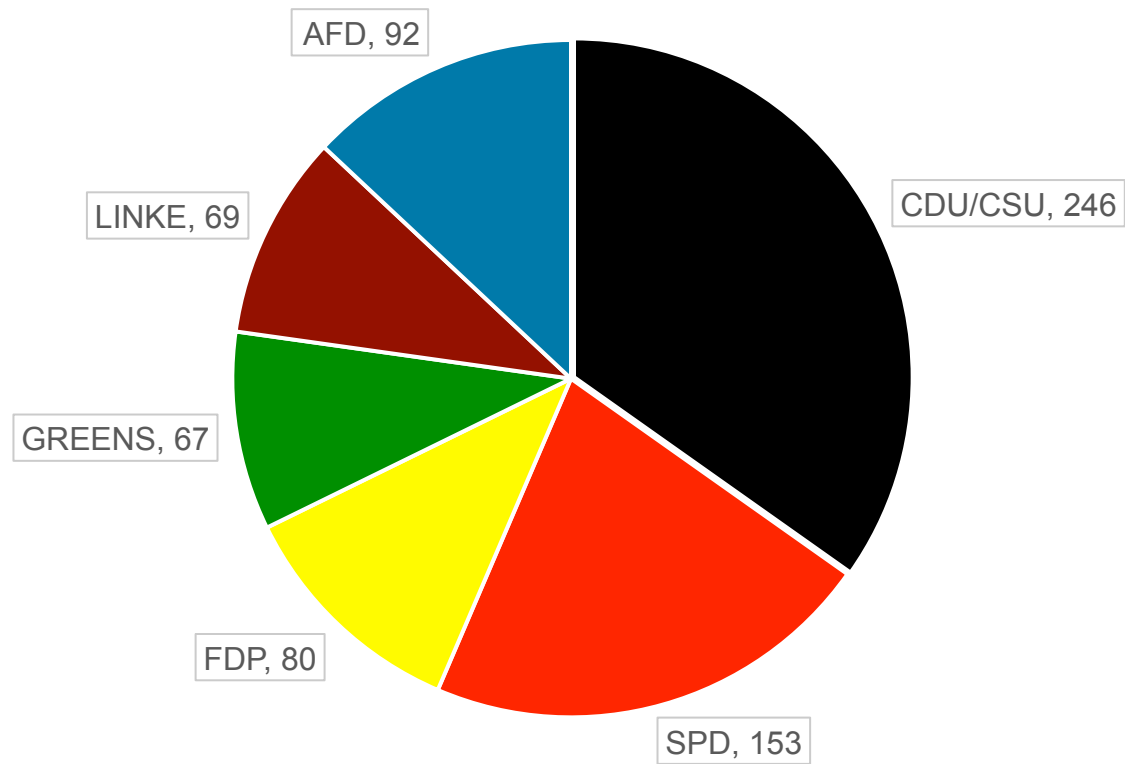# The result of the German election in 2017

The result of the German election in 2017

Bundestagswahl 2017 – alte Länder und West-Berlin
76,8 % Wahlbeteiligung

Union	SPD	FDP	AfD	Grüne	Linke	Sonst.
34,1	21,9	11,4	10,7	9,8	7,4	4,7

Gewinne und Verluste im Vergleich zu 2013

Union	SPD	FDP	AfD	Grüne	Linke	Sonst.
-8,1	-5,5	+6,2	+6,3	+0,6	+1,8	-1,3

Bundestagswahl 2017 – neue Länder und Ost-Berlin
73,2 % Wahlbeteiligung

CDU	AfD	Linke	SPD	FDP	Grüne	Sonst.
27,6	21,9	17,8	13,9	7,5	5,0	6,3

Gewinne und Verluste im Vergleich zu 2013

CDU	AfD	Linke	SPD	FDP	Grüne	Sonst.
-10,9	+16,1	-4,9	-4,0	+4,8	-0,1	-1,0

The 2017 election in Germany (Bundestag, seats)

Coalition formation

Two coalition options:

- Jamaica (CDU/CSU, FDP, Greens): 393/709
- Grand coalition: 399/709

- Eve of the election: SPD → opposition
- October 2017: Jamaica coalition starts to negotiate
- → FDP quits the talks after four weeks (November 19, 2017)

- Minority government vs. GroKo vs. new elections?
- → SPD again wants to be in opposition
- → President Steinmeier talks to the parties

Coalition formation

- January 12, 2018: GroKo pre-talks successful
- January 21, 2018: SPD party congress approves official negotiations (56,5%)
- February 7, 2018: coalition agreement finally negotiated
- February 26, 2018: CDU approves the GroKo on a party congress (97%)
- March 4, 2018: SPD members approve the agreement (66 %)

Agenda of the new government

CDU

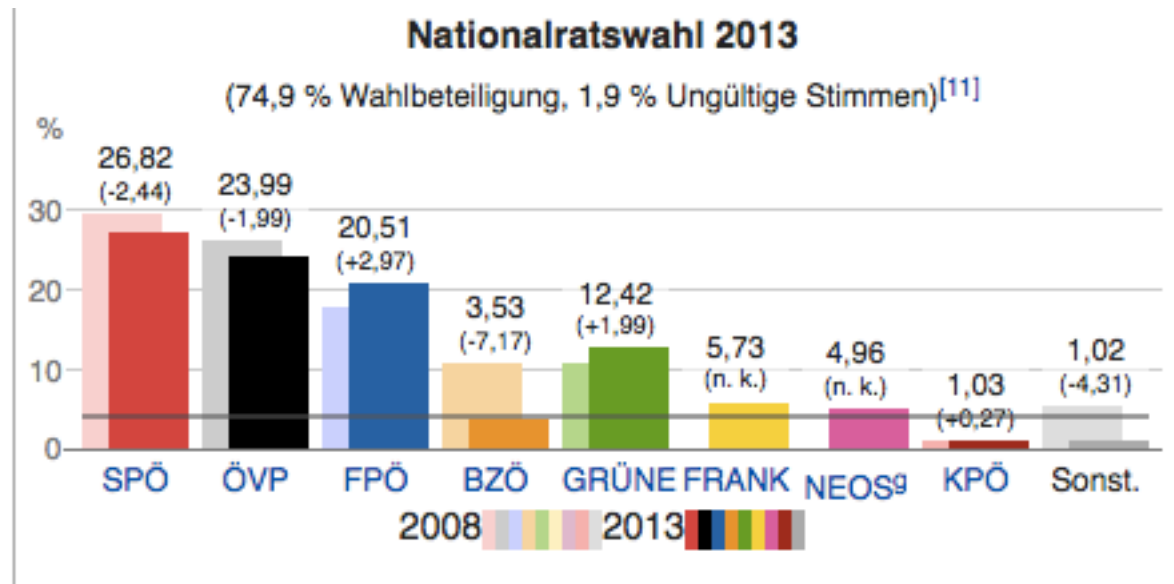Six ministries: economy, defence, health, chancellery, education, agriculture

CSU

Three ministries: interior (+ homeland), infrastructure, development

SPD

Foreign affairs, finance, labour and social, justice, family, environment

Outcome: to be seen

Parliamentary election in Austria in 2017
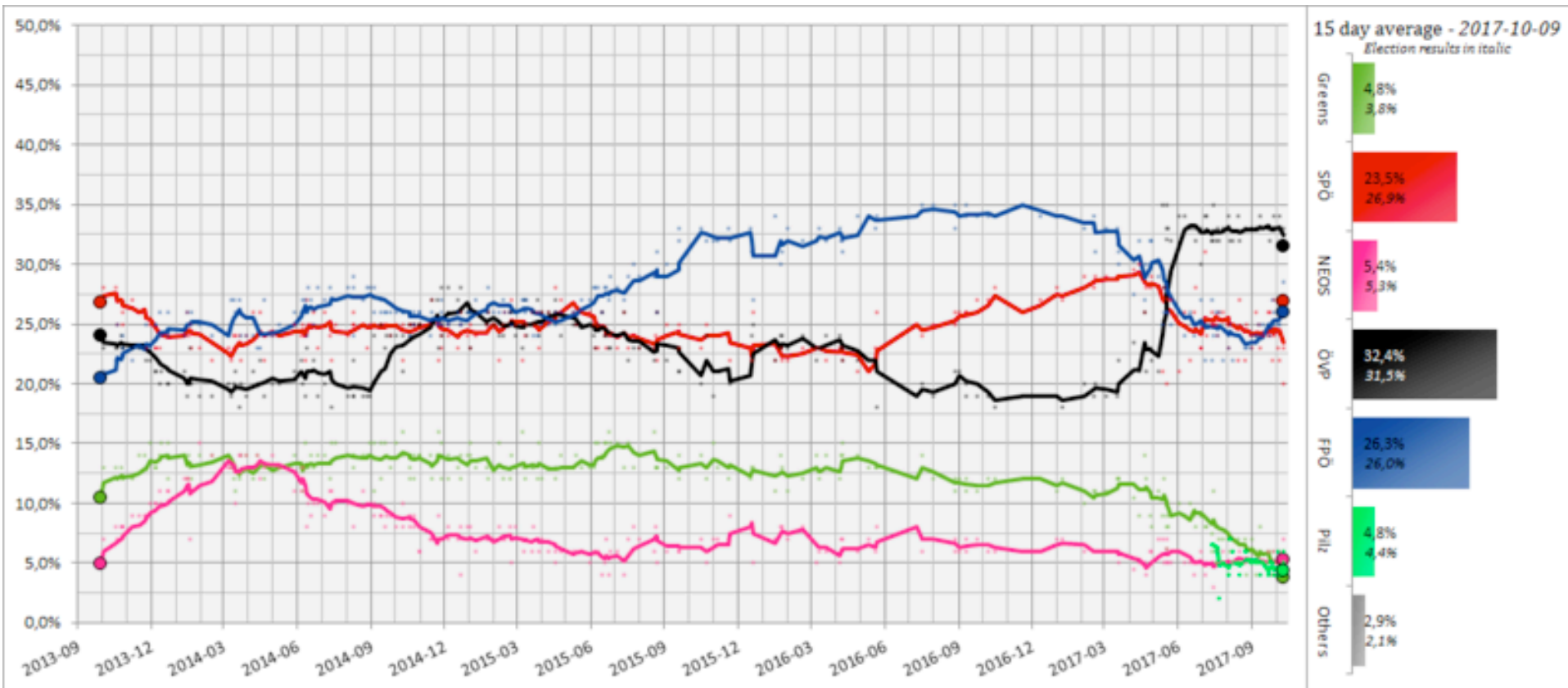
Parliamentary election in Austria in 2017

FPÖ spot

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nCOaE4XMbY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHHRAyBZYwo

The result of the Austrian election in 2017

The result of the Austrian election in 2017

- Very controversial election campaign
- More than 100 TV debate between the main candidates
- ÖVP successfully occupies the FPÖ's core issues
- FPÖ: populism + victimisation
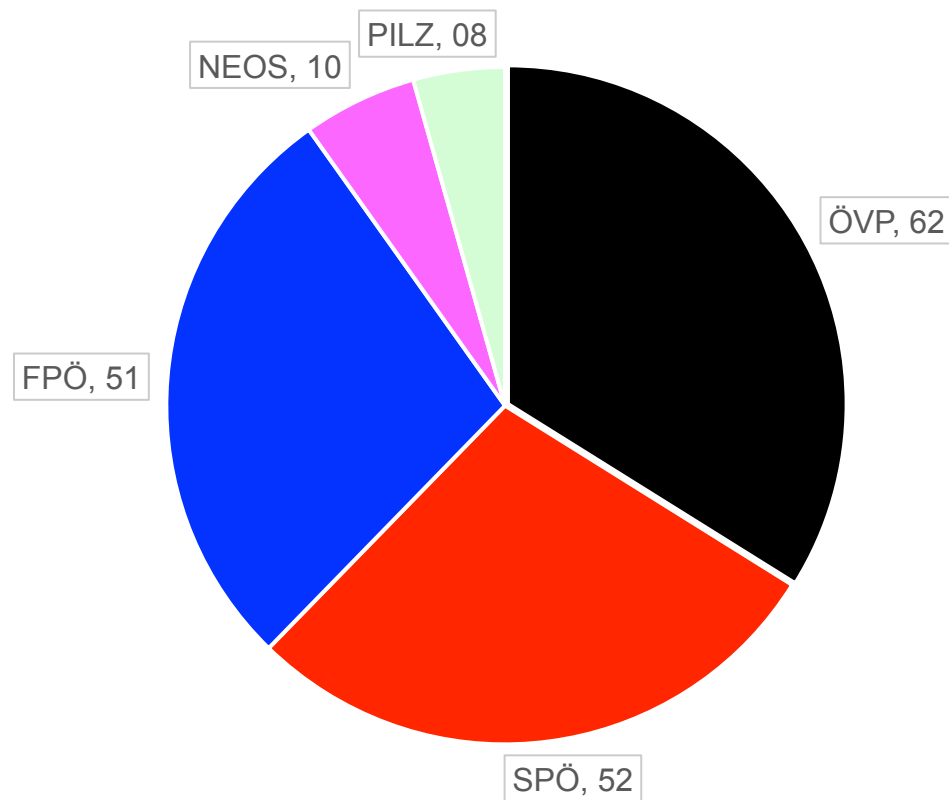- SPÖ fights an uphill battle and performs badly in the campaign (Silverstein affair)

The result of the Austrian election in 2017
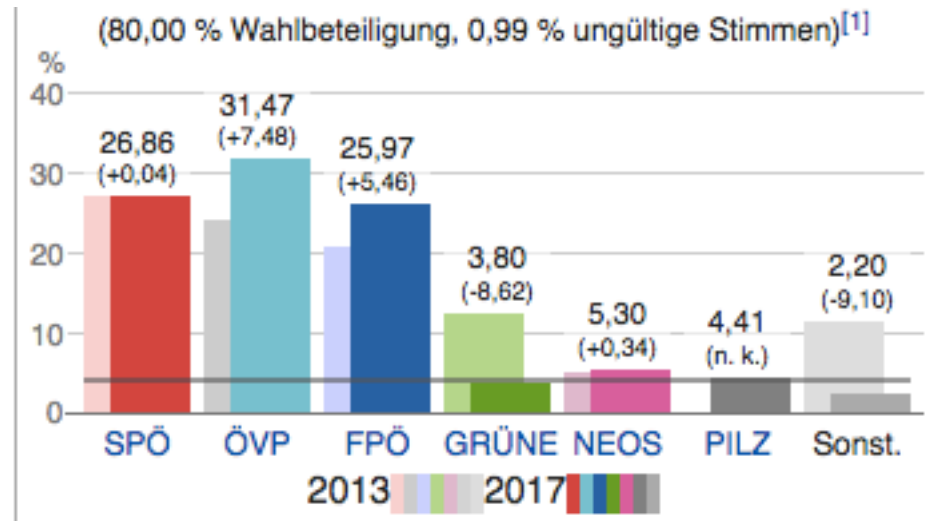
The result of the Austrian election in 2017
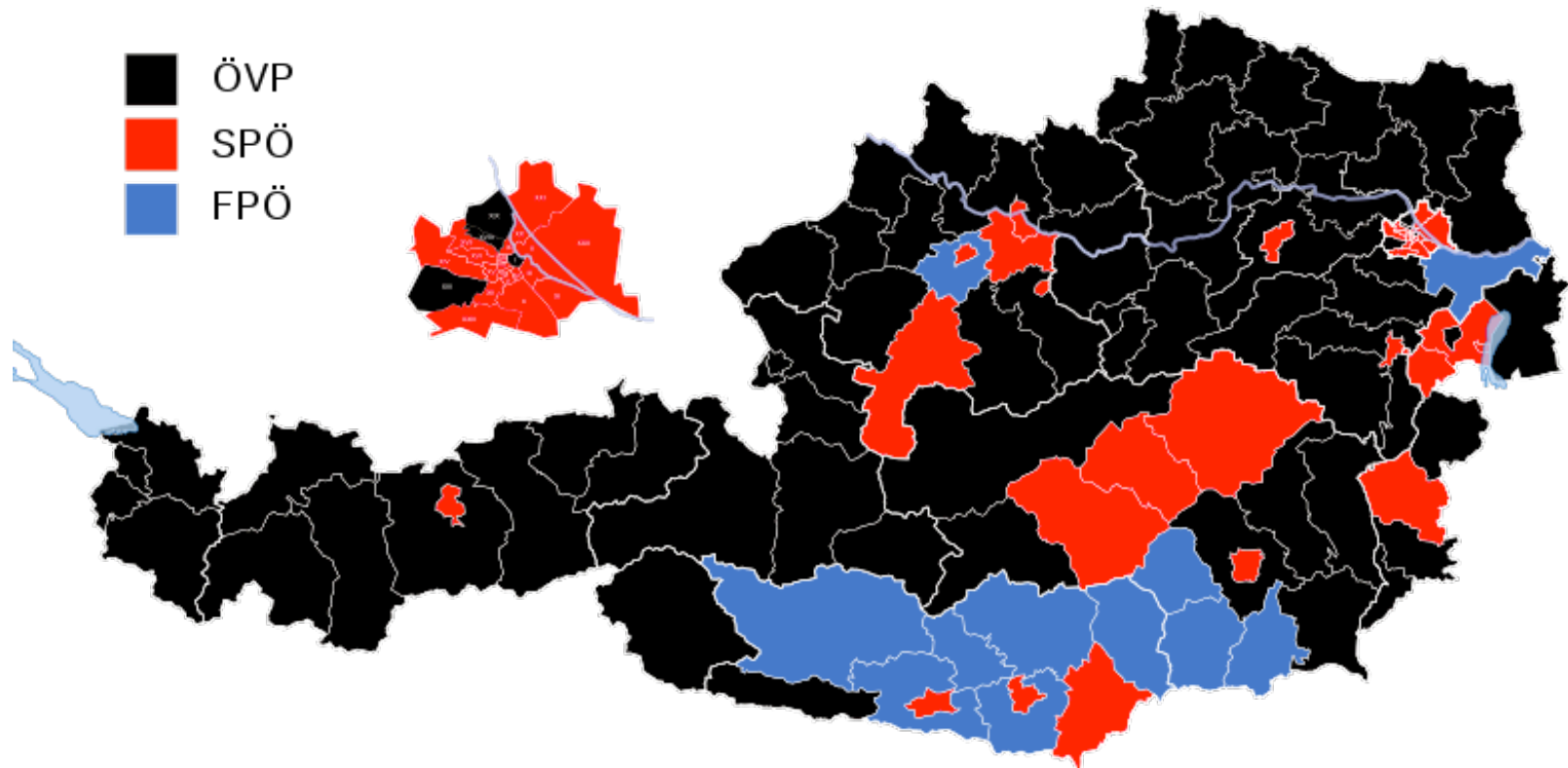
The 2017 election in Austria (Nationalrat, seats)

Coalition formation

- Negotiation talks between ÖVP and FPÖ
- Started on October 25, 2017 → finished before Christmas
- Sworn in January 13, 2018

A sift to the right

- 40 % of the FPÖ MPs are from fraternities
→ Many newly employed in the ministries are from fraternities/right wing groups

- "Germania song book" affair

- Kickl: "concentration of migrants"

- Attacking public broadcasting

Agenda of the new government

- Symbolic politics: change of the constitution
- "Die Republik Österreich bekennt sich zu einem wettbewerbsfähigen Wirtschaftsstandort, als Voraussetzung für Wachstum und Beschäftigung."
- Weaker state in economic terms but law and order (police, border protection)
- → Deregulation
- Against minorities (refugees)
- Social benefits for the well-off part of the society
- Ambivalent relationship to CEE countries