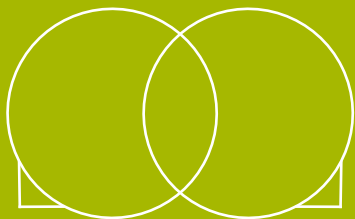
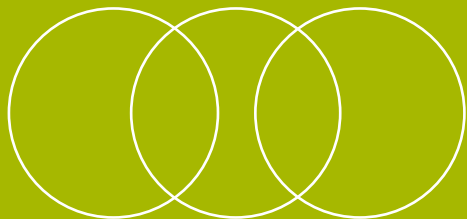


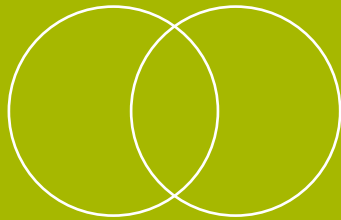
# Participation



**matters!**



Opportunities for civic and  
political participation of mobile EU citizens



4 **Introduction**

6 **Residence**

14 **Participation**

24 **Information**

26 **Imprint**



## **You are allowed to and you should participate!**

Participation is a basic principle of democracy. To participate means to get involved as a person who has – for one reason or another – her/his centre of life's interest in Austria and to shape one's personal, civic, and political environment.

Per January 1st, 2016, the total population of Austria was 8.700.471. Of this amount, approximately 7,2 % have the citizenship of another EU country (incl. EEA countries and Switzerland). Around 6,9 % of them are older than 16 years.

**You are an EU citizen in Austria? Then you are allowed to and should participate.**




**Opportunities for participation can be found on different levels, such as:**




- elections on communal and European level
- Chamber of Labour elections
- workers councils and youth consultative councils (Jugendvertrauensrat) elections
- staff council elections in public services
- ÖH (Austrian students` representative body) elections
- civic involvement, civic initiatives and associations

# **Exercise your Right as an EU citizen in Austria and get involved!**

## EU citizens in Austria – information on Residency Rights

EU citizens (including Island, Liechtenstein, Norway und Switzerland) are visa-free and have the right of residency in the Austrian federal territory for a period of three months. This right is independent from economic activity in Austria. EU citizens (including Island, Liechtenstein, Norway und Switzerland) are may reside in Austria for more than three months according to Union law if


-  they are employed or self-employed in Austria or
-  they have sufficient means of livelihood and health insurance coverage for themselves and their family members so that they avoid becoming a burden on the social welfare system or claiming compensation allowance (Ausgleichszulage) or
-  the primary purpose of their stay is to complete their studies (including vocational training) at an Austrian public school or a legally recognised private school or an education facility and have sufficient means of livelihood and health insurance coverage for themselves and their family members.

-  All persons establishing their residence in Austria are obliged to comply with the registration requirements of the Austrian registration law (Meldegesetz). Whoever establishes or terminates their residence is obliged to register or deregister with the responsible authority.
-  EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who have a right of residence for a period of more than three months according to Union law can have a registration certificate (Anmeldebescheinigung) issued upon application as documentation of their right of residency. Such an application must be made within a four-month period starting from the applicant's arrival in Austria.
-  After a five-year period of continuous legal residency in Austria a document certifying permanent residency (Bescheinigung des Daueraufenthalts) can be issued upon application.

**source/further information:** [www.help.gv.at](http://www.help.gv.at)

# I founded the association because it needed to be done.

“Today I can help and be in contact with other associations and organisations. That is very important for me.”



**Angela Peschir.** Romanian citizen, has been living in Graz since 2003. Works as a project manager with her own association called „Das österreichisch rumänische Kulturzentrum Graz-Aripile Sperantei“.

“Without politically interested and committed citizens, public life will soon be taken over by forces who do not act in the interest of the citizens. They would only think about profit or their personal advantage.”



**Wolfgang Schühly.** German citizen, has been living in Graz since 2005. Married to an American, a daughter. Works as a University Assistant.



**For me, private initiatives have a higher societal relevance.**



**In the present day,  
it is not enough to  
stand by and watch.**

**Kirsten Ives.** British citizen, has been living in Graz since 1994. Married to an Austrian, two children. Works as a Brand Consultant.

“I generally consider myself to be the observant type, but with time I realize that one wants to be more involved because one is not satisfied with the status quo.”

## EU citizens in Austria – opportunities for participation

Opportunities for participation for EU citizens can be found in the following areas:

### Taking part in political elections if you have reached 16 years of age on the day of elections (or standing as candidate if you have reached 18 years):

a) You can actively and passively take part in the elections to the European Parliament every 5 years, which means you can vote as well as be voted for as candidate. Non-Austrian EU citizens with place of residence in Austria have the right to either vote for the Austrian members to the European Parliament or for the candidates of their home country.

b) You can actively and passively take part in communal elections (Gemeinderatswahlen or Bezirksvertretungswahlen in Vienna) if you have your place of residence in the municipality where the elections are held. If you have reached the voting age, you will officially (with some exceptions in Burgenland) be informed well in time by letter to you in your place of residence about upcoming elections. In this letter you will also be provided with information on where to find your polling station.

**source/further information:** <http://www.sora.at/suche-download/wahlkalender.html>

### **Upcoming opportunities for participation:**

In 2017 communal elections will be held in the municipalities Waidhofen an der Ypys, Graz, Krems/Donau, and in Burgenland

The next election for the European Parliament will be held in 2019

### Taking part in the elections to the Austrian students` representative body (ÖH – Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft)

The Austrian students` representative body is directly elected every two years by the students. All regular ÖH-members can exercise both the active and passive electoral right, when they are in the same semester the election takes place: approved to study/ continue their study, are permitted to study, AND have paid their students` union (ÖH) fee by the deadline, which is the 30th of March.

**source further information:** <https://wahl.oeh.ac.at>

**Upcoming opportunities for participation:**  
ÖH elections in May 2017

**Upcoming opportunities for participation:**  
Chamber of Labour elections 2019.

### Taking part in the Chamber of Labour elections (AK –Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte)

The Chamber of Labour represents the interests of 3,4 million employees and consumers in Austria. All employees, apprentices, persons on maternity (paternity) leave, as well as the unemployed are subject to compulsory membership; self-employed persons, civil servants and agricultural workers are exempt. The Chambers also represent the interests of retired employees. All Chamber members are entitled to actively vote irrespective of their citizenship.

**source/further information:** [www.arbeiterkammer.at](http://www.arbeiterkammer.at)



### **Getting involved in the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)**

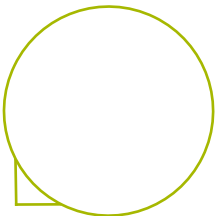
The Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) is the only Austrian organization representing the interests of workers based on voluntary membership. The number of members is now approximately 1.2 million. At company level, the interests of employed persons are represented by workers councils or youth consultative councils (Jugendvertrauensräte). The latter specifically represent young employees and apprentices in a company. EU citizens have – under certain conditions – both active and passive electoral rights.

**sources/further information:** [www.betriebsraete.at](http://www.betriebsraete.at), [www.bigjay.at](http://www.bigjay.at), [www.proge.at](http://www.proge.at)

### **Taking part in staff council elections in the public sector.**

Civil servants or apprentices who have been employed in the public sector for at least one month at the election deadline date are eligible to vote. Election deadline date is the 42th day prior to the election day. In order to be able to run for elections, people: have to be older than 15 years, have to be employed or in an apprenticeship for more than 6 months, and need to have unrestricted access to the Austrian labour market.

**Upcoming opportunities for participation:**  
regularly in your company



**Upcoming opportunities for participation:**  
regularly in your department

### **Getting involved in civic initiatives or founding an association.**

Civic participation – put into practice either individually or with like-minded people in the form of an initiative – aims at stating and protecting the needs and interests of a private citizen or group of private citizens. Civic initiatives are formed – usually unexpectedly – when citizens are confronted with projects that are planned without being consulted and which they view as posing an immediate interference and threat to quality of their life.

Whenever there is a need to pursue common interests and shared values on a more formally-organised and permanent basis, citizens tend to form an association. The Austrian Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and the right to form or be member of an association for all. This is of utmost importance for our democracy. Founders and members of associations can either be natural (individuals) or legal persons (e.g. other associations). Natural persons do not need to have Austrian citizenship.

**sources/further information:** [www.partizipation.at/http://aktion21.at/](http://www.partizipation.at/http://aktion21.at/)  
[www.bmi.gv.at](http://www.bmi.gv.at)

**Upcoming opportunities for participation:**  
regularly in your neighborhood



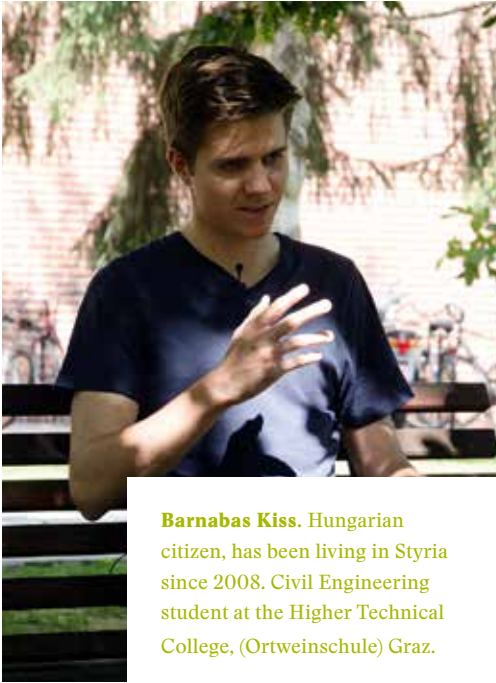
“We also attend school or work here, and as a result find it that we have the right to participate.”

MATEA DRUŽIN • STUDENT

**Yes, we are members. We have the right to voice our opinion. We are after all here.**



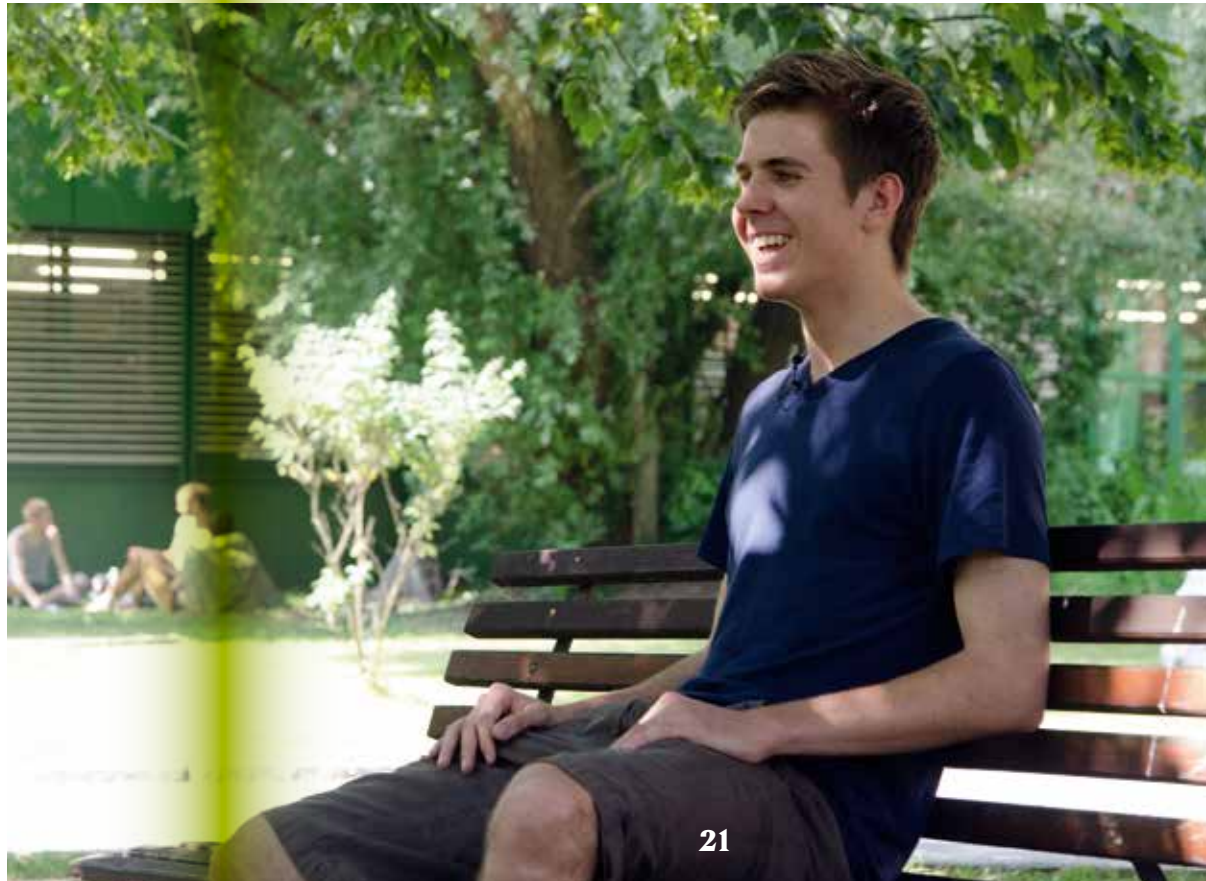
**Matea Družin.** Croatian citizen, born in Zell am See, Austria. Ceramic Art Craft student at the Higher Technical College for Arts and Design, Ortweinschule Graz.



**Barnabas Kiss.** Hungarian citizen, has been living in Styria since 2008. Civil Engineering student at the Higher Technical College, (Ortweinschule) Graz.

“I consider it a privilege these days that we can participate, that we have our own opinion. It is therefore also important to participate exercise these rights.”

**My parents wanted that their children have a better future.**





**Petra Pintarić.** Croatian citizen, born in Austria. Ceramic Art Craft student at the Higher Technical College for Arts and Design, Ortweinschule Graz.



## Besides, we also grew up here in Austria.

“Yes, you should vote because you can achieve something. And you always find time to vote because it doesn` t take long.”

**Further information at a glance:**

**Residence and electoral rights in Austria:** [www.help.gv.at](http://www.help.gv.at)

**Statistics on residential population:** [www.statistik.at](http://www.statistik.at)

**Schedule of upcoming elections in Austria:**  
<http://www.sora.at/suche-download/wahlkalender.html>

**Austrian students` representative body:**  
<https://www.oeh.ac.at> resp. <https://wahl.oeh.ac.at>

**Austrian Chamber of Labour:** [www.arbeiterkammer.at](http://www.arbeiterkammer.at)

**Austrian Trade Union Federation:** [www.oegb.at](http://www.oegb.at) resp. [www.proge.at](http://www.proge.at)

**Works councils:** [www.betriebsraete.at](http://www.betriebsraete.at)

**Youth consultative councils:** [www.bigjay.at](http://www.bigjay.at)

**Civic initiatives:** <http://aktion21.at>

**Associations:** [www.bmi.gv.at](http://www.bmi.gv.at)

**Good practice on participation:** [www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at)  
Rights of EU citizenship: [www.bmeia.gv.at/europa-aussenpolitik/europa-politik/europa-der-buergerinnen](http://www.bmeia.gv.at/europa-aussenpolitik/europa-politik/europa-der-buergerinnen)

**10 EU rights at a glance in all European languages:**  
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/de/wussten-sie-schon...--pbNA0414127/>

**Project “Participation matters”**

The brochure in hand is a publication issued within the framework of the EU-funded project “Participation matters – Fostering civic and political participation of mobile EU citizens” (JUST/2014/RCIT/AG/CITI/7283). The general objective of this project is to foster the successful inclusion and participation of mobile EU citizens in the host EU country’s civic and political life.

**Interviews with EU-movers on the topic of participation.**

Why is it important to participate? Find the opinions of the people presented in full length on [Youtube/Participation matters in Austria](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1111111111).

**[www.inspire-thinking.at](http://www.inspire-thinking.at)**

**[www.participationmatters.eu](http://www.participationmatters.eu)**

**<https://www.facebook.com/participationmattersinAustria/>**



## **Partnership**

COSPE – Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo die Paesi Emergenti (IT)  
[www.cospe.org](http://www.cospe.org)

MPDL – Movimento por la Paz (ES)  
[www.mpd.org](http://www.mpd.org)

inspire – Verein für Bildung und Management (AT)  
[www.inspire-thinking.at](http://www.inspire-thinking.at)

ANCI Toscana (IT)  
[www.ancitoscana.it](http://www.ancitoscana.it)

ANCI Emilia Romagna (IT)  
[www.anci.emilia-romagna.it](http://www.anci.emilia-romagna.it)

## **Credits**

Photos: Elena Laaha

Design & layout: Isabella Schlagintweit

Video production: UAR Media – Ulrich Reiterer

Project coordination: Max Mayrhofer

## **Disclaimer**

Sole responsibility for the content of this brochure lies with:  
inspire – Verein für Bildung und Management  
ZVR: 632126545

Marienplatz 1, A-8020 Graz  
email: [office@inspire-thinking.at](mailto:office@inspire-thinking.at)  
web: [www.inspire-thinking.at](http://www.inspire-thinking.at)



---

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of inspire – Verein für Bildung und Management and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

