

EUtopia's Democracy Cities

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The Bosch Alumni Network is a cooperation between:



This booklet is based on visions and tools for urban democracy in Europe that were developed in the project EUtopia's Democracy Cities and during a workshop in Vienna in August 2020. The workshop took place within the Bosch Alumni Network.

Ideas for a more inclusive democracy

Having a say in political matters constitutes the basis of democracy and also makes up for a huge part of one's attachment to the community. But not being entitled to vote is a classic dilemma in today's European member states – especially in urban areas with increasingly international populations. While EU citizens are entitled to vote at least at the local level they lack this right at the national level. They are penalized for exercising their fundamental freedom to work or study in another country. Third-country nationals often lack any say in political matters.

The project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* discussed visions of a transnational European urban democracy: What can cities learn from each other? How can they cooperate in providing more and better democratic tools?

During the project and the workshop we explored lessons learned from different experiences. Our goal was to foster dialogue on solutions for a more inclusive democracy and encourage further action and co-creation among European cities. Nevertheless, we did not stick to the experiences already made but developed ideas that have not yet been implemented anywhere. This *nowhere yet* is the basis of utopian thinking.

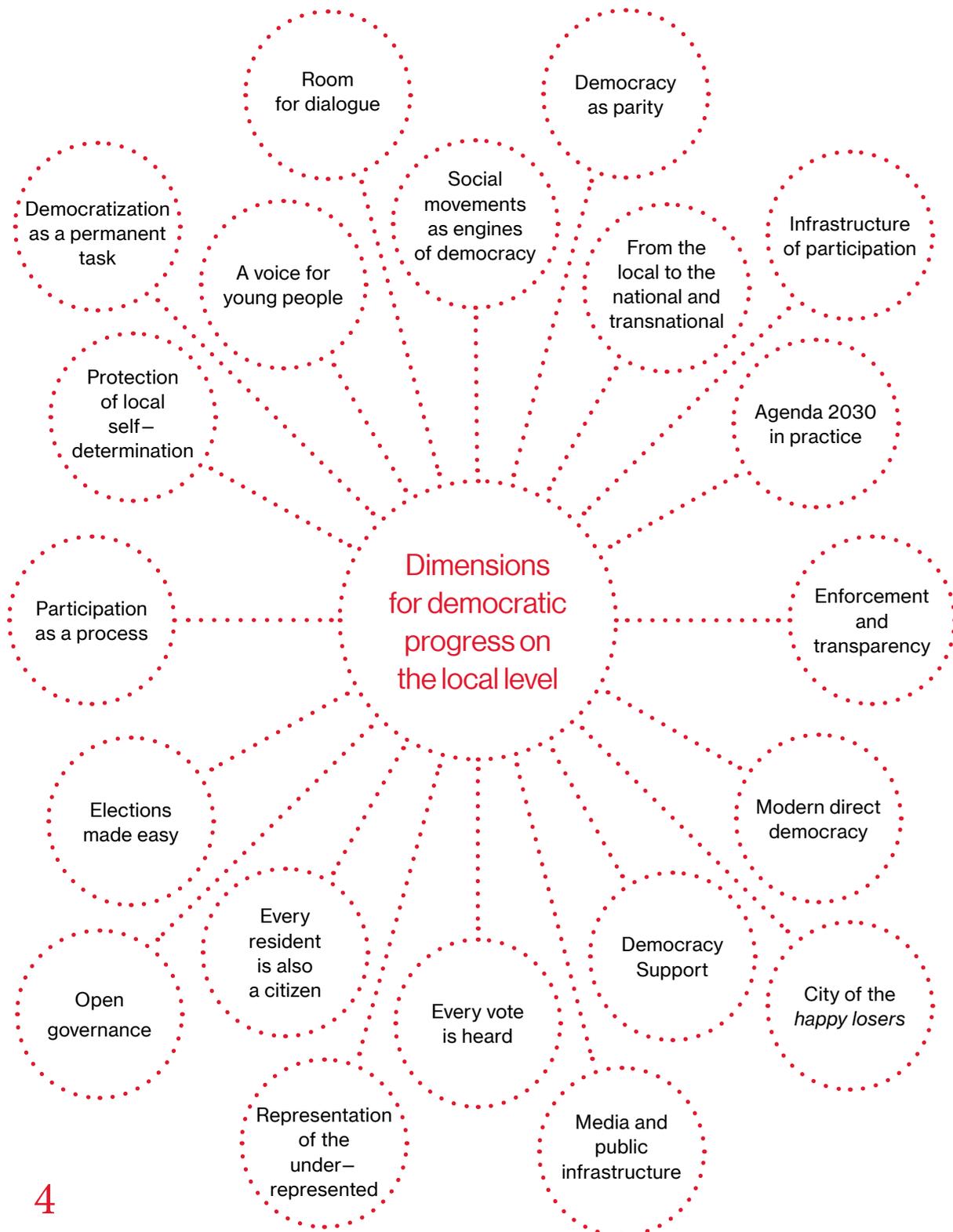
Utopian Democracy as political thinking

500 years ago Thomas Morus wrote *Utopia*, a story about an ideal society that does not exist yet. He introduced the term utopia into philosophical thinking. "Utopia" comes from Greek οὐ (not) and τόπος (place) which translates as "no-place" or "nowhere". Therefore, utopia is not so much a place that actually exists but rather trains the thinking of possibilities. Utopia has the task of offering a tale of the good life, of showing examples worth fighting for, worth taking the risk of doing things differently from now on. Hence, utopias are radical social thought experiments. They are based on concrete problems of social reality and construct diametrically opposed images of a new society. They are often characterized by their great distance from the status quo and therefore often seem out of touch with reality. Nevertheless, utopia is not a synonym for "not possible" but rather provides us with an image of a different life, makes us capable of speaking about the new world to come. Utopias sketch a story of the future as it could be. Hence, they always have a political content.

EUtopia is a language game between European Union (EU) and utopia. But more than this it hints to the Greek word "eutopia" from εὖ (good) and τόπος (place) which translates as "the good place". The project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* focused on thinking about the EU as the good place for democratic innovations.

The term *Democracy Cities* is based on the *Magna Charta and for an International League of Democracy Cities* founded in Rome at the 2018 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy. There, more than 800 democracy experts, public officials and citizens from more than 200 cities and 80 countries discussed and drafted a provisional Magna Charta that has been the subject of extensive global

discussion since. Now, the final document identifies 20 different dimensions for democratic progress on the local level:



Among the initial supporters of this Charta were Bern, Brno, Madrid, Reykjavik, Rome, Seoul, Taipei and Vienna.

Vienna is a special case: Almost one third of all Viennese are not allowed to take part in the elections that take place on 11 October 2020 because they lack Austrian citizenship as a prerequisite for the right to vote. Those people – most of whom have been living in Vienna for years, often for decades – are subject to laws and political decisions in whose further development they have no right of co-determination. Half of them are EU citizens and are therefore at least allowed to vote on the district level, the other half (third-country nationals) won't have a say at all.

Vienna is growing and with it the democratic deficit. In the past two decades the percentage of Viennese who are not entitled to vote has doubled. Excluding about one third of the population leads to a massive legitimacy deficit. Therefore, the task of designing *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* was particularly urgent in Vienna. That's where the first workshop within the Bosch Alumni Network took place.

HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN ^{4th}
WORKSHOP

Wiener EUtopie

AUF DER SUCHE NACH DER
EUTOPIE EINER DEMOKRATISCHEN STADT

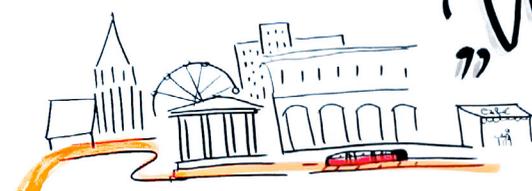
AM 28.9.2020
IM LWK
WIEN

DISKUSSIONSGRUNDLAGE
ECOD

PRÄSENTATION AM
TAG DER
DEMOKRATIE

VERTRETERINNEN
DER STADT
WIEN
ERHALTEN DIE
ERGEBNISSE

FORUM
IM NOV



PROJEKT LÄUFT SEIT
NOV 2019

WORK
SHOP

WORK
SHOP

OKT 2020
WIEN
WAHL

JUNGE EU-BÜRGERINNEN:
WENN MAN SIE BEI
SCHON DRÜCKEN
BETRIEBEN SIND
SPÄTER DANK WIRD WENIG

INSIGHTS:



BEGLEITET VON
TAMARA EHS

VORARBEIT
UNTERSTÜTZT
DASS EU-BÜRGERINNEN
AUF LANDTAGS-
EBENE
WÄHLEN DÜRFEN

WIEN ER
REFORMEN

- Wahlalter 16j
- Petitionenrecht
- Partizipation
- 5 Brank Budget
- Werkstatt Junger Wien



no taxation
without
representation!



ICH BIN IN DER
DDR AUFGEWACHSEN
MIT CARDS UM
FREIE, GEHEIME
GLEICHE WAHL

DEMOKRATIE
IST:
ALLE WÄHLEN
~ WAHLPFLICHT?

WIE
WÜNSCHE MIR
DAS HEIME
& FREIHEIT

ROBIN
HATTE WÄHREND
SEINER FLUCHT
IN DER
GEMEINDENSCHAFT
DER KLEINSTADT...

ICH WÄNSCHE MIR
DASS DEMOKRATIE
NICHT NUR DA IST
SONDERN
GELEBT WIRD



BASIS

Ein HÖHERES
Besseres Demokratieverständnis



WIE KANN MAN
DAS WÄHLEN
ALS NÄHERUNG
ZUM WÄHLEN
ERSTANDE

ad hoc
Wahlbeteiligung
nach
Betroffenheit

FLIEßENDE
ÜBERGANG
PARTIZIPATION

KOMMUNAL
BUNDESEBENE
... UND WEITER?

POLITICAL BELONGING

DIE NÄCHSTEN
SCHRITTE

if it's about
them, do it
without them!

How to become a Democracy City

Within the time frame of our project and workshop numerous events important for a democracy city took place in Vienna: Not only was the city undergoing an election campaign but a new European Citizens' Initiative called Voters without borders was launched on September 1 paying attention to the Europe-wide problem of electoral exclusion. Moreover, on September 18 the *European Capital of Democracy* was launched in Vienna by mayors from various European countries: From 2021, each year, one city will become the European Capital of Democracy. Similar to the European Capital of Culture – which has been designated annually since 1985 – from next year onwards media attention will focus on a city that is particularly innovative in strengthening and improving democracy.

The project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* could refer to initial data and discussion results that Tamara Ehs had collected as part of her project *If no vote at least voice* at the Austrian Academy of Sciences between November 2019 and October 2020. This project brought together inhabitants of Vienna not holding Austrian citizenship (i.e. EU-citizens and as well as third country nationals, most of them from European and even EU candidate states like Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey) in a deliberative setting. They assessed, among other topics, if and how the right to vote is linked to feeling European in a metropolitan setting and discussed their vision of a truly democratic European city. Having two sorts of “European foreigners” in a community – one group at least allowed to vote on the district level, one not (yet or even not anymore in case of the British) – created different and therefore even more exciting visions for an EUtopia.



Our discussion was accompanied by opinion polling. Martina Zandonella from SORA, Austria's leading institute for social research and political consulting, conducted a representative survey among 981 Viennese aged 16 and over to find out whether they feel European. The results show clear differences between EU citizens and third country nationals.

The discussions that took place during the project revealed that the essence of a Democracy City consists of three parts: participation, infrastructure and support.

Visions for better participation

- ▶ Electoral rights for all inhabitants aged 16 and over, not based on citizenship but on residence (after 2–5 years of permanent residence)
- ▶ Reducing the parliamentary term (2 or 3 instead of 5 years)

Due to the high level of fluctuation in major European cities the question was raised as to whether it would be worth considering for a European democracy city to reduce the legislative period to two years. In this way, EU citizens exercising their fundamental freedoms and studying or working for a limited period of time in a city other than their home city would still be able to have a say.

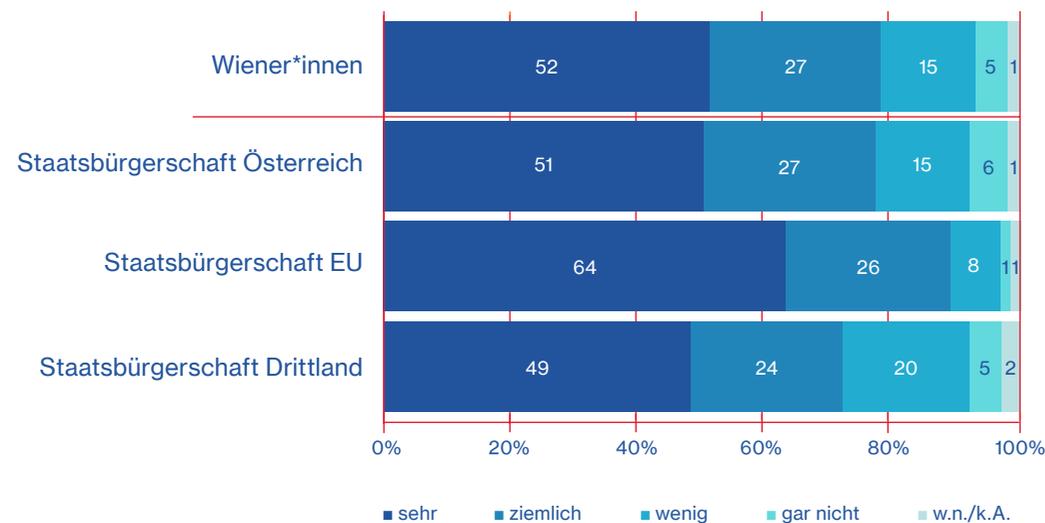
- ▶ Ad hoc participation for people beyond the city limits (stakeholders)

With regard to Vienna as a metropolitan region, consideration was given to extent participation to everyone who is affected by Viennese politics and law: A Slovak or Hungarian commuting to work in Vienna would have a well-founded interest in having a say in some of the Viennese issues.

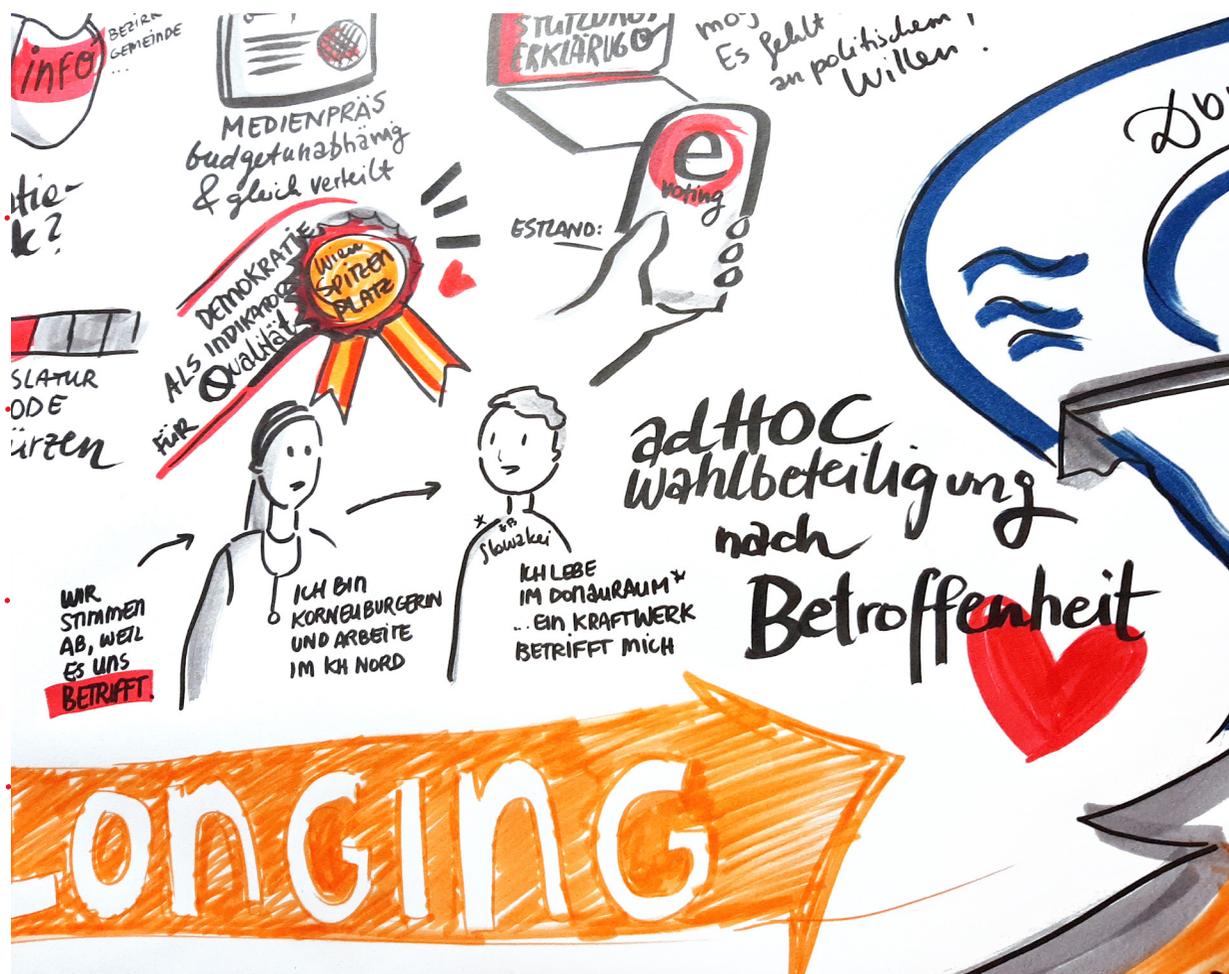
- ▶ More participation between elections such as right to petition, participatory budget

Fühlen Sie sich als Europäer*in?

S O R A



Anm.: Repräsentative Befragung unter 981 Wiener*innen ab 16 Jahren; Telefon- & Online-Interviews mittels standardisiertem Fragebogen; Erhebungszeitraum: 25.Mai 2020 bis 26. Juni 2020.



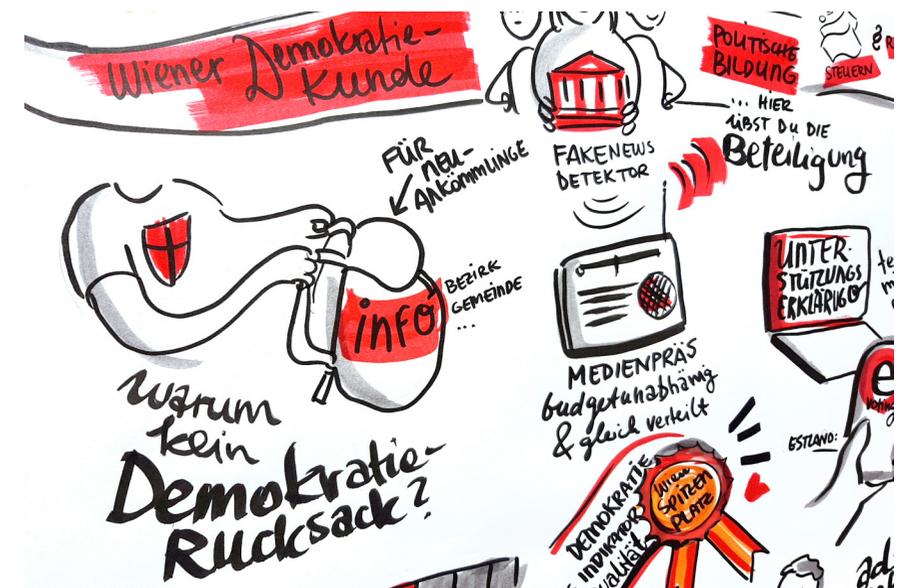
Visions for better infrastructure

- ▶ More ways of taking part like eVoting.
- ▶ Information on how, where and when to take part

A Democracy City must inform new residents about urban democracy in different languages. Participants of our workshop developed the idea of the *Democracy rucksack* as an analogous to the well-known *Vienna Nappy Rucksack*, a gift by the city to all babies born in Vienna. Accordingly, the *Democracy Rucksack* should be sent home when a new main residence is registered.

- ▶ Urban Democracy Courses

Pupils at school but also adults should be offered low-threshold civic education courses with a focus on urban democracy: How does democracy work at the district level? How can I get involved in the city's politics? What are my basic rights?



Visions for more support in the run-up to elections

With regard to the upcoming elections in Vienna the EU citizens in the workshop – who after all are entitled to vote at district level – noticed that there was too little information about the parties campaigning in their respective district. Whilst there is a lot of media coverage concerning the municipality level, EU citizens are lacking information about the district level. Hence, a *Democracy City* must ensure that all parties have the same media presence – even those “only” running for office at the district level – no matter how much budget a party has available for buying media attention.

The participants of the workshop agreed that information merely presented in the district newspaper is not enough. Innovative on- and offline ways to address the district residents in particular had to be found.



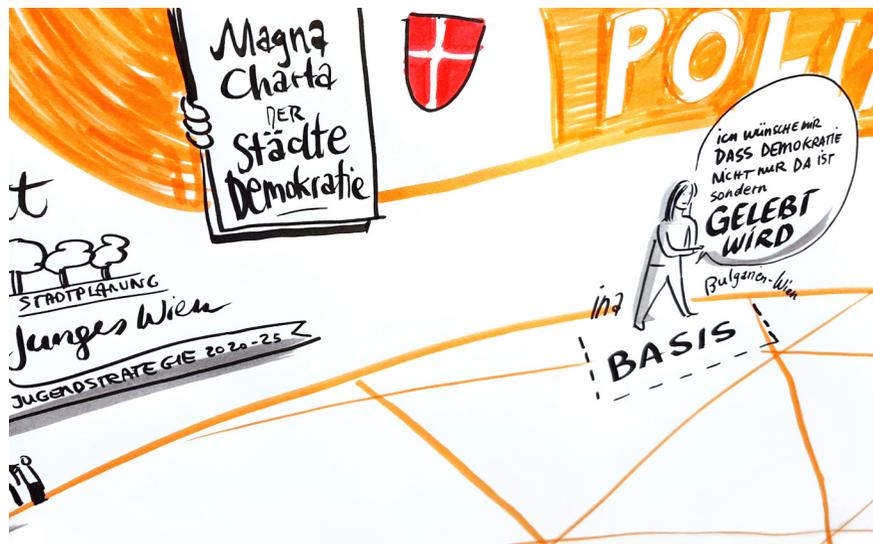
Workshop & Methods

The project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* is designed to spread out to other European cities with a huge multi-national population (like Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Prague or Stockholm) and similar challenges concerning political participation. The discussions in the workshop shall help facilitate critical, productive dialogue for strategic action in Europe. In order to enable imitation the project's methodology and methods are presented:

Usually, democracy policy is handled by professionals like policy makers as well as scholars of political science and law. But as democracy is about the *demos* the project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* set the people concerned, especially those typically excluded from having a say, centerstage. The methodological approach of the project was based on the concept of “participatory research” at the heart of which is the assumption that those who are affected by a question should also be active actors in knowledge production. Therefore, the aim was to initiate a common knowledge process in groups with heterogeneous expertise and scientific experience. In this approach, the political knowledge of the participants and their understanding of democracy shaped the design and the research process. By doing so we pursued the claim to disclose representation, under-representation and non-representation in European cities, starting with Vienna. Views and opinions that are not represented due to the electoral exclusion should at least be given voice. The aim of the project organizer, Tamara Ehs, was to assist participants in finding and formulating visions and ideas for a Democracy City.

To achieve the research goal we used different methods. Finally, our data corpus comprised:

- Statistical data about Vienna's inhabitants without Austrian citizenship (age, gender, highest completed education, income, citizenship)
- Deliberative mini-public of 20 people that were composed just like the population of Vienna not holding Austrian citizenship (realized within the project *If no vote at least voice*)
- Opinion polling on the question "Do you feel European?" (a representative survey among 981 Viennese aged 16 and over to detect differences between EU citizens and third country nationals)
- Workshop with members of the Bosch Alumni Network and invited external stakeholders
- Protocols of mini-publics and workshops as well as graphic recording of the Bosch Alumni Network workshop



Participants

The wider group of participants of the project *EUtopia's Democracy Cities* included more than 1.000 inhabitants of Vienna.

Most of them were reached by professional opinion polling. A further 30 people took part in the deliberative mini-publics conducted in May 2020 and in the workshop with members of the Bosch Alumni Network and invited external stakeholders held in late August 2020.

When looking for participants we encountered the usual challenges: Based on previous studies and research projects it is known that those people who are already under or not represented in a democracy prove to be the most difficult to reach for taking part in workshops. Projects like ours primarily appeal to "active citizens", moreover there is a participation gap concerning education and socioeconomic status.

An additional problem came up with the CoVid19 pandemic. We had to postpone the deliberative mini-publics as well as the workshop to late spring and summer when the danger of infection was lower and when public gatherings were again allowed. Nevertheless, many potential participants were reluctant to take part and cancelled their participation out of concern for their health. However, we managed to gather enough ideas and visions for a *Democracy City* from people of different origins, as an overview of the participants' citizenship shows: Afghanistan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Russia and Switzerland.

