



# Is compulsory voting democratic?

The electoral systems in the various democratic states differ greatly. What democracies have in common, however, is that they only get infused with life and accepted through active participation, especially through the voter turnout of the citizens. In Luxembourg, Belgium, Liechtenstein and Australia, voting is compulsory for all citizens who have the right to vote. Neighbouring countries such as Germany or France, on the other hand, do not have compulsory voting.

## What are the arguments for or against compulsory voting?

- Read the individual arguments and try to find examples to illustrate them.
- What other arguments are there? Think especially of the situation in Luxembourg.
- Tick the three arguments that are most important to you personally.

### For compulsory voting

- All citizens should take responsibility for the state and democracy by voting.
- The more people vote, the more likely it will be that the future parliament will represent the wishes of the majority.
- People discuss important political issues before the election.
- High voter turnout makes extremist parties less influential.
- Not voting means supporting the opinion of active voters.

### Against compulsory voting

- Voting is a civil liberty. Freedom also means being able to choose not to vote.
- People who do not vote often do so in protest against political decisions or the ruling parties. Compulsory voting kills this protest vote.
- Since elections are conducted with secret ballots, a person who does not actually want to vote can cast a blank or invalid ballot.
- Those who do not want to vote but still have to could vote randomly if voting were compulsory. This could distort the election results.

Source: Wahlrecht oder Wahlpflicht in einer Demokratie? | Politik für Kinder, einfach erklärt - HanisauLand.de (amended and shortened) (last access: 28.11.2022)

### For experts:

- Preparation: Form groups of four (pro and con) and collect facts, figures and arguments for or against compulsory voting in democracies.
- Execution: You compete against each other in two teams. The other groups form the audience.
- Result: After the discussions, vote on whether you are for or against compulsory voting in Luxembourg. You can vote either online and anonymously or by lining up on a specific side in the classroom.