



Voting at 16?

In Belgium, 16-year-olds were granted the right to vote in European elections in 2022; in Austria, they have been allowed to vote in elections for far longer already. In Luxembourg, voluntary voting rights for 16 year-olds were rejected in a referendum in 2015. What are the arguments in favour of or against voting rights at age 16? What are the prerequisites for being able to take a decision in elections?

- Read the following excerpts from newspaper articles and work out the arguments in favour of or against the right to vote at age 16.
- What other arguments would you list?

M2

Right to vote from the age of 16 in European elections in Belgium

“This is a decidedly positive decision for more democracy, for more Europe and for the young generation. Our wish is that young people who want to can get involved in the political discussions about their future and to launch a wide-ranging information and awareness-raising campaign to get them to sign up and participate”, stated Guillaume Defossé, Federal deputy of the Ecology party. (...) Belgium is thus the fourth EU country after Austria (16 years), Malta (16 years) and Greece (17 years) to allow young people to vote in European Parliament elections.’

Source: In Belgium, Right to vote at age 16 in European elections - East Belgium Direct <https://ostbelgiendirekt.be/electoral-right-with-16-European-elections-319054> (translated, last access: 28.11.2022)

M1

Bundestag votes to lower voting age for European elections

‘The current threshold of 18 years of age has barred many people from the right to vote “who can and want to take on responsibility in numerous places in society and participate in the political process”, the text of the law states. In particular, the younger generation is affected by political decisions - for example, in the protection of the climate or in developing social security systems - argue the coalition factions. Therefore, they should be given a say.’

Source: Bundestag votes to lower voting age for European elections <http://www.edulink.lu/uee6> - Der Spiegel (translated, last access: 10.2.2023)

M3

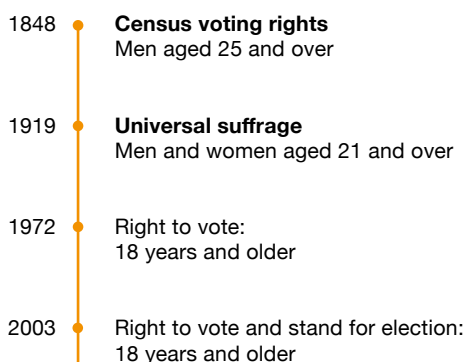
Voting from 16: pros and cons. Who wants electoral reform?

Already today, voter turnout among first-time and young voters is particularly low if they come from socially disadvantaged families. Critics of voting at 16 see mainly privileged children as winners of a lowered voting age. Mobilising first-time voters can improve voter turnout in the long run. However, researchers emphasise that voting at 16 is not a foregone conclusion. It is important that young people are prepared for their first election, understand the democratic processes and principles, and grasp the political background.

Source: Voting at 16: Pros and Cons Who wants electoral reform? (change-magazin.de) <http://edulink.lu/480y> (translated, last access: 28.11.2022)

M4

Voting age in Luxembourg



Discussion: Voting from the age of 16? Voting up to age 75?

- Discuss the following question using the World Café method (<https://alass.lu/we-discuss-with/>): To what extent is age decisive for being able to vote in elections?
- Compare your results with those of your neighbouring tables.
- Vote in class: Should the voluntary voting age be lowered to 16?