



Voting just isn't the same thing

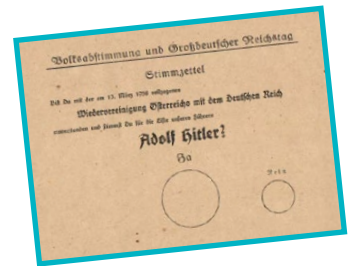
Free elections are an important feature of a democracy. The aim of this task is to teach students that the existence of an electoral process alone is not sufficient to describe a functioning democratic state. Indeed, the electoral process can be obstructed in various ways.

Procedure: The photos (M1-M5) are hung up in the room. Students go around the room in pairs, look at the different examples and discuss whether the democratic election process is restricted in each case and if so, how? They record their ideas by jotting them down under the respective examples.

Educational material regarding M1: Election rigging

1938 Referendum:

- Hitler gave the order to invade Austria on 12 March 1938. Wehrmacht troops met no resistance.
- Hitler's plan at the beginning: to unite Austria with Germany in a single union. The 'jubilation' of the Austrian population led him to decide in favour of the complete annexation of Austria. Corresponding laws were enacted on 13 March 1938.
- In a referendum on 10 April 1938, which was by no means conducted according to free and democratic principles, officially 99.73 percent of Austrians and 99.01 percent of Germans voted for 'reunification'.



Information material for M2 and M3: Representativeness of the electorate

2. Representativeness in social media surveys (non-state actor)

(...) 'The people have spoken', Musk wrote about his decision to unblock former President Donald Trump's profile on Twitter. However, the survey was not representative: around 15 million users took part in Musk's 24-hour poll, while the service has almost 238 million daily active users, according to the latest available data. A slim majority of 51.8 per cent were in favour of Trump's return. This corresponds to around 7.8 million users or just under 3.3 per cent of all Twitter users.

Source: <https://www.n-tv.de/politik/Elon-Musk-entsperrt-Twitter-Account-von-Donald-Trump-article23730038.html> (last access: 30.01.2023)



3. Representativeness in European elections

- A new European Parliament is elected every five years.
- The respective representatives are elected in each Member State.
- As an EU citizen, you vote in the EU country in which you currently live.
- As voting is not compulsory in most Member States, turnout varies from country to country.



Information material for M4:

Lack of political pluralism

- People's Republic of North Korea (DPRK)
- 687 seats in parliament
- 1 single candidate (per constituency)
- Labour Party: 100% of the votes
- Communist Workers' Party has been running the country under the leadership of the Kim family since 1945.
- The elected People's Assembly (five-year term) meets only once or twice a year to deal with policy guidelines and budget issues.
- 2019: Voter turnout 99.99%
- Compulsory voting: all North Koreans aged 17 and over
- Anyone who does not participate or votes against the official candidate is considered a traitor.

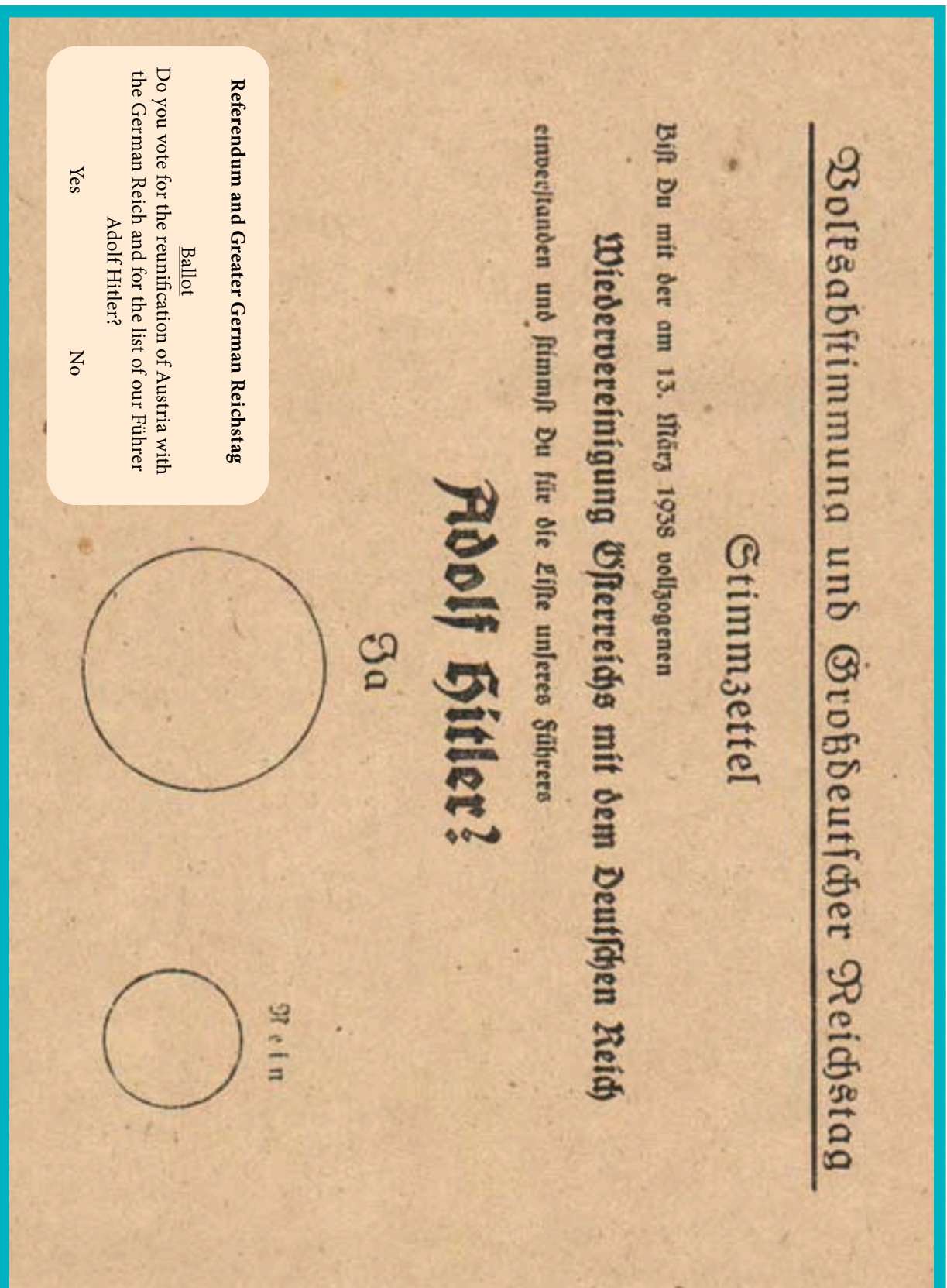


Information material for M5:

Sham referendum

- On 11 May 2014, the self-declared People's Republics in Donetsk and Luhansk held referendums on their independence.
- Organised by the pro-Russian separatists.
- Referendum in an area with civil war-like conditions; held in an environment characterised by a willingness to use violence and threats.
- No democratic standards in the electoral process: small number of polling stations, no voting booths, no matching of voters with electoral rolls; no independent observers.
- There were only a few days between the announcement of the referendum and the date on which it was held, meaning there was no social or political discourse.
- Election results: In Donetsk, with a turnout of 75%, a total of 89% are said to have supported independence. In Luhansk, with a turnout of 81%, this rate is said to have been as high as 96%.
- Vote not accepted internationally as it violated international law. The Ukrainian government in Kyiv as well as the EU, the USA and the OSCE stated that they did not recognise the referendum results because it was illegal.





Referendum on the reunification of Austria with the German Reich, 1938 Source:  public domain

- Is the democratic electoral process affected? Give reasons.

A screenshot of a tweet from Elon Musk (@elonmusk) on Twitter. The tweet text reads: "The people have spoken. Trump will be reinstated. Vox Populi, Vox Dei." Below the text is a quote tweet from the same user: "Reinstate former President Trump". The tweet is dated 1:53 vorm. · 20. Nov. 2022 and has 940,119 likes and 134,956 replies. The interface includes a heart icon for likes, a speech bubble icon for replies, and a link icon for copying the link. The Twitter logo is in the top right corner.

 **Elon Musk** 
@elonmusk · **Folgen**

The people have spoken.
Trump will be reinstated.
Vox Populi, Vox Dei.

 **Elon Musk**  @elonmusk
Reinstate former President Trump

1:53 vorm. · 20. Nov. 2022 

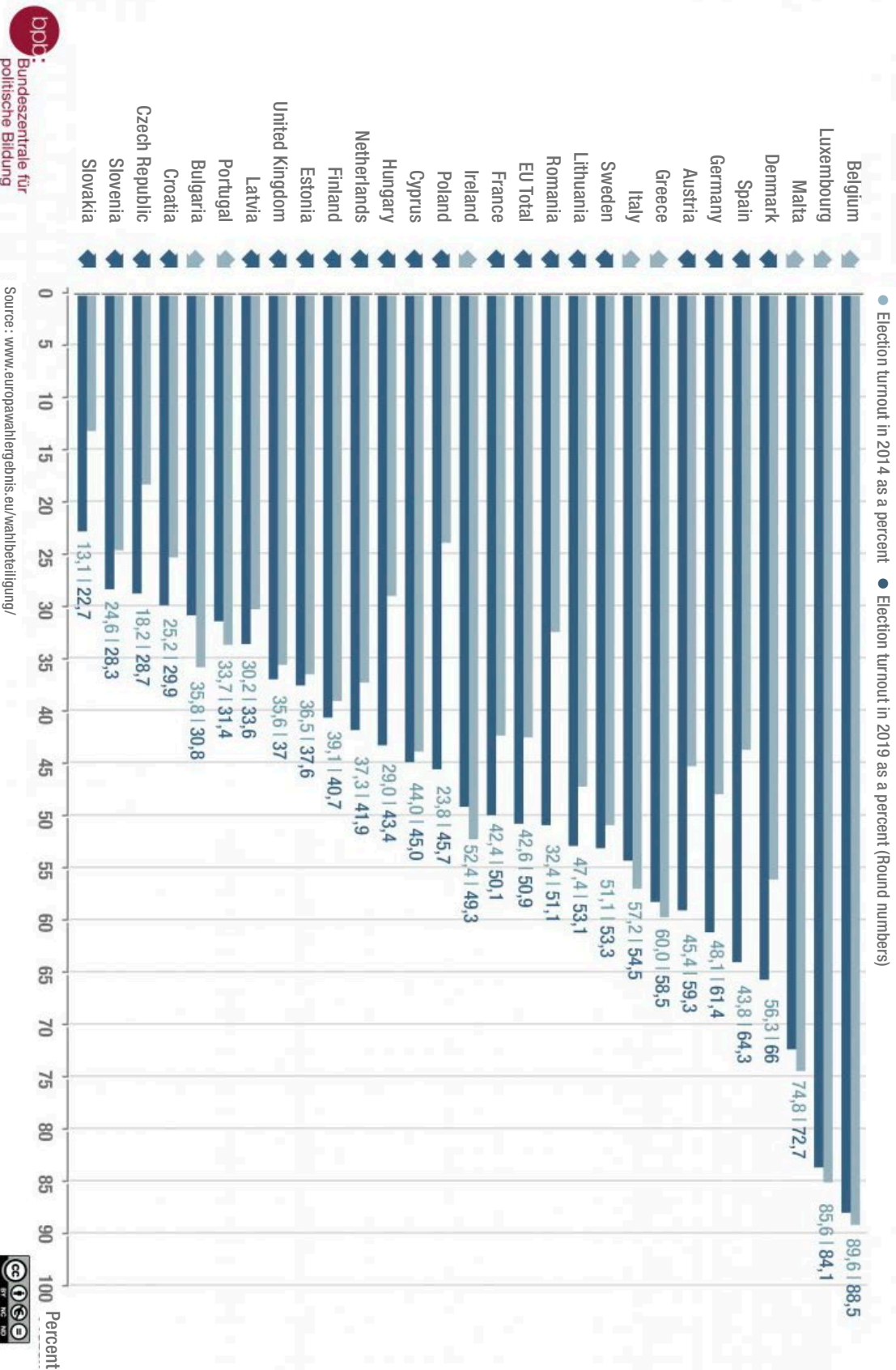
 **940.119**  **Antworten**  **Link kopier.**

134.956 Antworten lesen

Online survey. Source: Screenshot Twitter (last access: 20.11.2022)

➤ Is the democratic electoral process affected? Give reasons.

European Election turnout



Bpb = Federal Agency for Civic Education

➤ Is the democratic electoral process affected? Give reasons.



Elections in North Korea. Source: Screenshot On Demand News 'Crowds go wild in North Korea as Kim Jong-un casts election vote' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdnodrLmcxg> (last access: 20.11.2022)

➤ Is the democratic electoral process affected? Give reasons.



Referendum in Russian occupied Eastern Ukraine, May 2014
Source: © EPA/Roman Pilipey

- Is the democratic electoral process affected? Give reasons.