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# Introduction to Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

Sessions 1+2

The political systems of Germany and Austria



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## Agenda

### Day 1

- The political system of Germany
- The political system of Austria
- The economic development by comparison
- Germany and Austria in the European Union

### Day 2

#### Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

- Most important developments in recent years
- Parliamentary elections in 2017: Campaigns, results, coalitions

## Agenda

Essay / seminar paper

- 3000 words (+/- 10 %)
- Topic of your choice
- Submit to: [tobias.spoeri@univie.ac.at](mailto:tobias.spoeri@univie.ac.at)

Criteria:

- Needs to be related to the course
- Needs to be approved by the lecturer

Deadline: April 30, 2018



## Today's agenda

1. The political system of Germany
2. The political system of Austria
3. The economic development by comparison
4. Germany and Austria in the European Union

# The political system of Germany

Wake-up question:

- What do you know about German politics?



## Historical legacies

	Germany
1871-1918	German Empire
1914-1918	WW1: from a local conflict to a global war (fighting RU, FR, UK, US) German Revolution of 1918-19: social tensions (population vs. aristocrats)
1919-1933	Weimar Republic: first democratic steps (large number of parties, unstable, massive societal tensions) → Economic crisis (1929) → Powerful president (could dissolve the Reichstag)
1933-1945	Nazi Germany: from the rise of Hitler and the NSDAP to WW2
1939-1945	WW2: Germany fighting (again) SU, FR, UK, US
1945-1990	From post-war Germany to FRG/GDR: (re)-establishing democracy (FRG) vs. authoritarian socialism in the GDR
1989-1990	Reunification
1990-present	Federal Republic of Germany

## Historical legacies

### Federal Republic of Germany

- Joining Europe
- Joining NATO
- The social market economy
- The Marshall Plan and the economic miracle (Wirtschaftswunder)

→ A Germany embedded in Europe and the west

### German Democratic Republic

- Joining the Warsaw Pact
- Erection of the Berlin Wall (1961)
- centralized command economy
- Slow economic decline

→ A second Germany embedded in the east

Reunion or the  
East just joining?

## Key institutions

Federal (parliamentary) Republic of Germany

1. Legal frame - Grundgesetz (“constitution”):
2. Legislative: Bundestag und Bundesrat (bicameral system)
3. Political parties
4. Executive: Government (“chancellor democracy”)
5. Judiciary
6. Federalism: 16 Länder

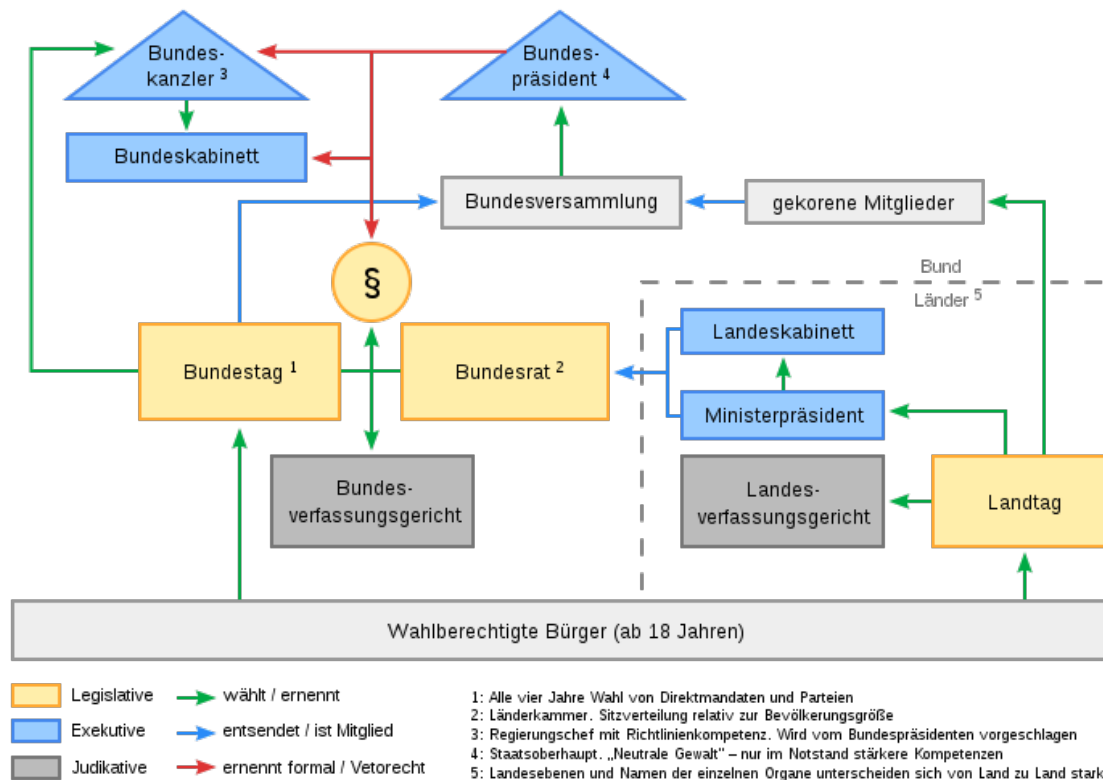


## Grundgesetz

“Temporary” constitution (1949)

- Human rights,
  - Democracy,
  - Rule of law,
  - Checks and balances,
  - Parties,
  - Federal vs. Länder level
- Consensus democracy
- difficult for any single actor to assert his or her will

# The political system



## Federal President

Federal president: a toothless tiger with mainly soft power

- Weimar experience
- Should unify all three pillars of democracy (executive, legislative, judiciary)
- 5 years term, can be re-elected once by the Federal Assembly
  
- Mainly representative functions
- Approves laws
- Approves the cabinet

## Bundestag/Bundesrat

Bundestag (598 members + X)

- More important chamber
- Elected every four years
- Free mandate for MPs (in theory)

Bundesrat (69 members)

- Second chamber
- Appointed by the Länder
- Imperative mandate (need to represent the Länder)
- Can propose laws via the government
- Can veto laws but Bundestag (in particular in terms of the constitution, taxes or federalism)

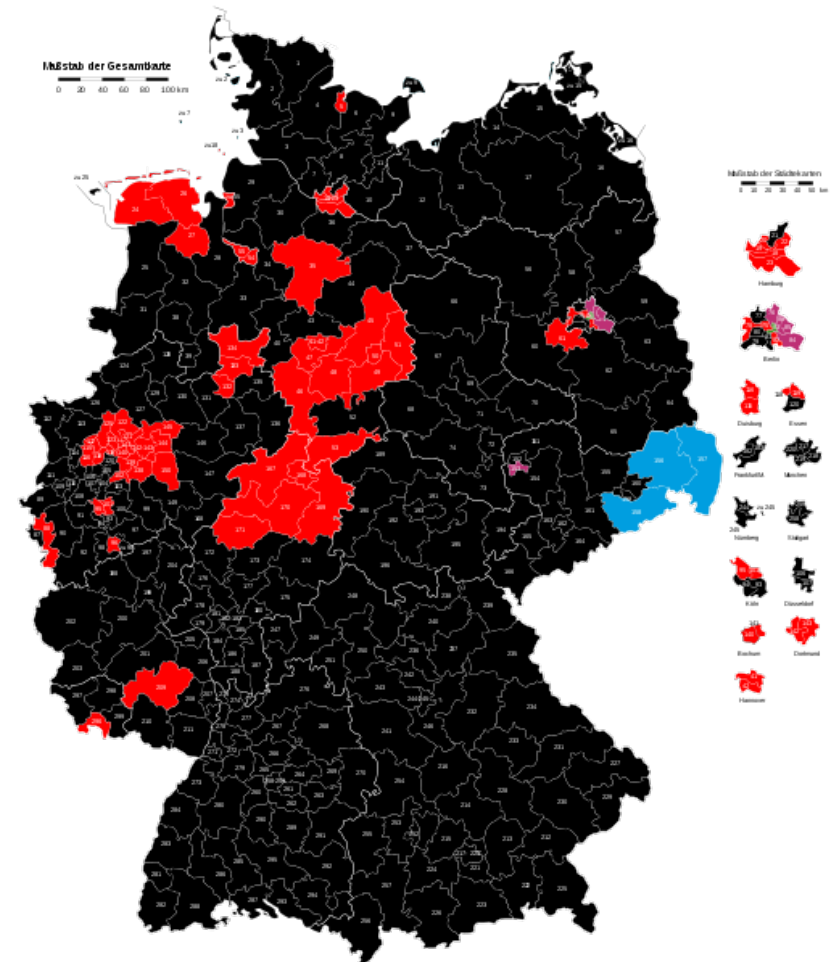
## The electoral system

It is getting complicated: One person, two votes?

- Bundestag: 5 % threshold
- Age: +18
- 1. Vote - Direct candidate (constituency): first-past-the-post (FPTP)
- 2. Vote - Party list (Länder lists): Proportional representation (PR)

## The electoral system

	1. Vote	Seats
CDU	30,2	185
CSU	7,0	46
SPD	24,6	59
FDP	7,0	0
GREENS	8,0	1
LINKE	8,6	5
AFD	11,5	3
		299





## The electoral system

	1. Vote	Seats	2. Vote	Seats in total
CDU	30,2	185	26,8	200
CSU	7,0	46	6,2	46
SPD	24,6	59	20,5	153
FDP	7,0	0	10,7	80
GREENS	8,0	1	8,9	67
LINKE	8,6	5	9,2	69
AFD	11,5	3	12,6	94
		299		709

## The electoral system

It is getting complicated: One person, two votes?

- Bundestag: 5 % threshold
- Age: +18
- 1. Vote - Direct candidate (constituency): first-past-the-post (FPTP)
- 2. Vote - Party list (Länder lists): Proportional representation (PR)
  
- Overhang seat (Überhangmandate):
- Party X receives more votes in the 1. vote than it receives in the 2. vote in a Land
- Example:

	A	B	C	Seats total		A	B	C	Seats total
Votes	50	30	20	100	Approach until 2008	60 (55%)	30 (27%)	20 (18%)	110
Seats	50	30	20	100		60 (50%)	36 (30%)	20 (24%)	120
Constituencies	60	0	0	60	Approach since 2013				
Overhang	10	0	0	10					

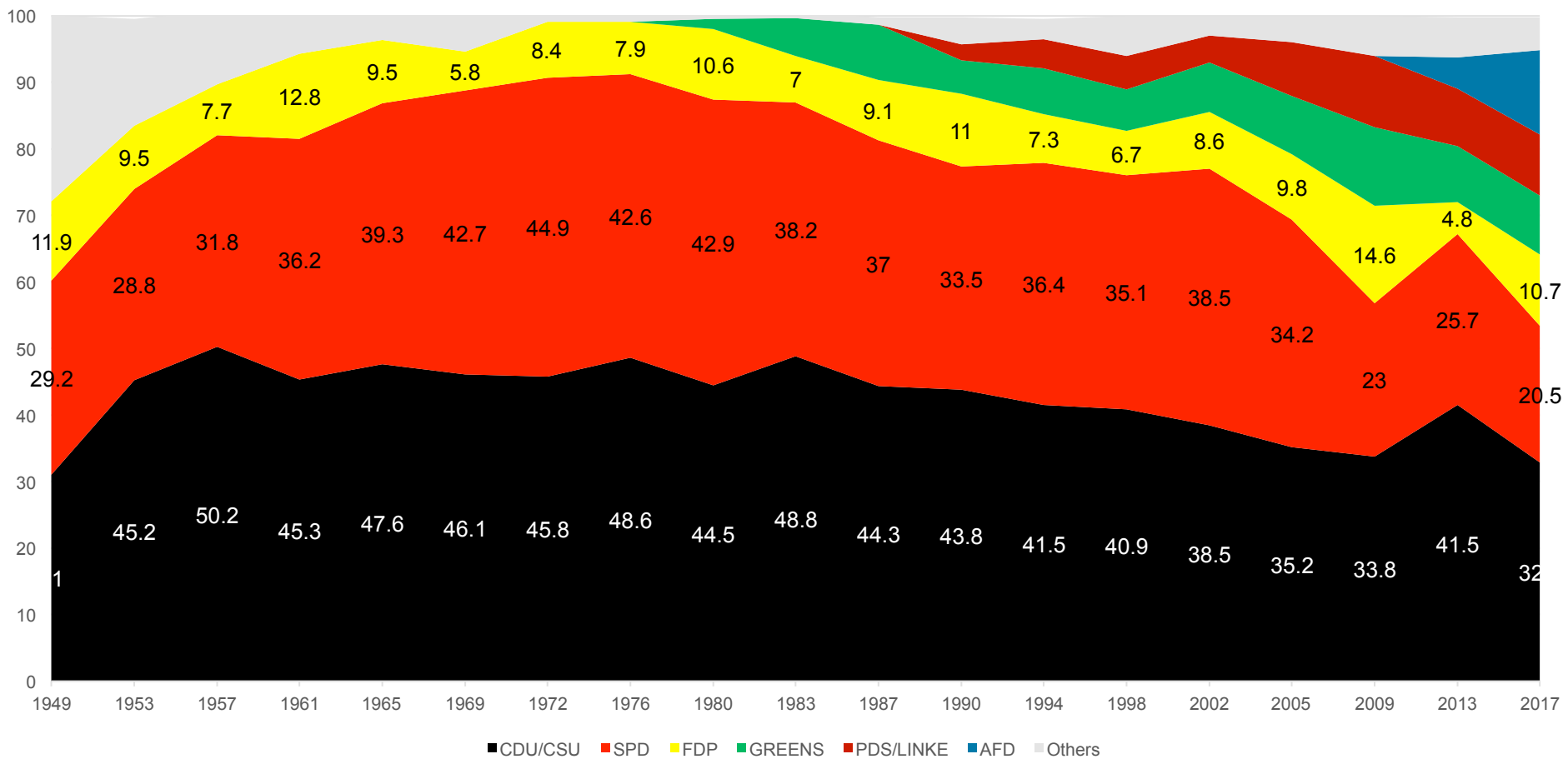


## Political parties

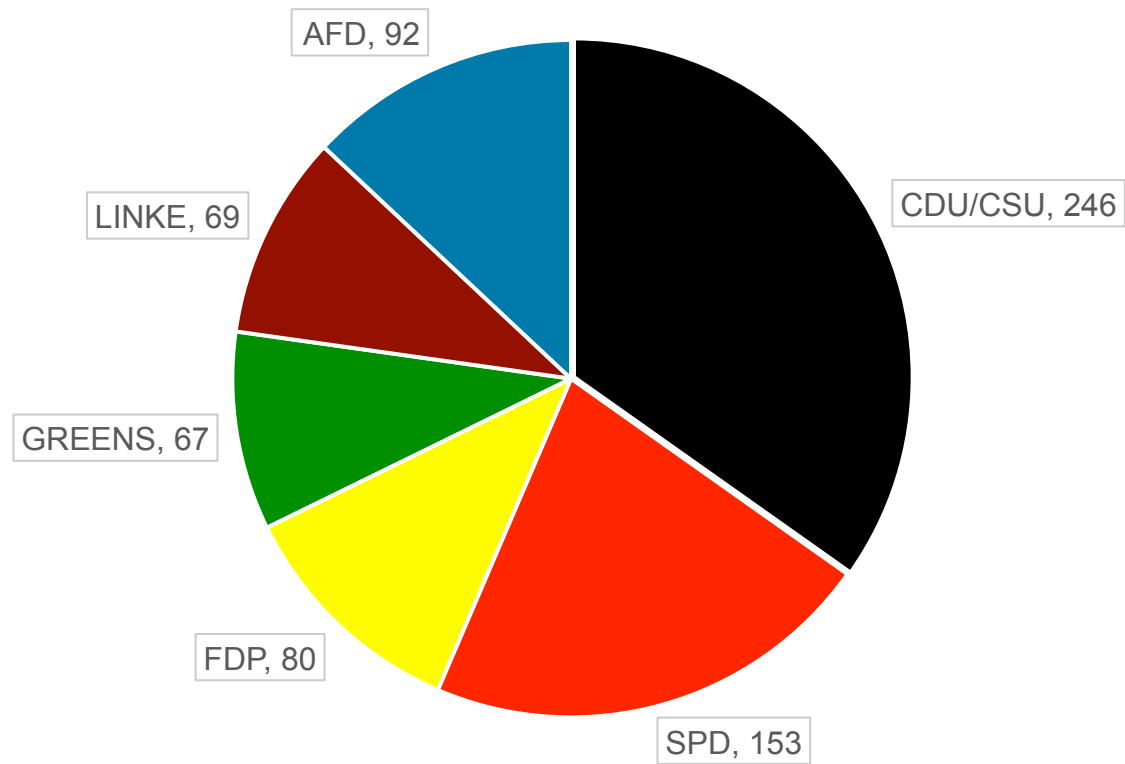
Abre.	Name	Found	EP	Position
CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany	1945	EPP	Christian democracy Liberal conservatism
CSU	Christian Social Union in Bavaria	1945	EPP	Regionalism Christian democracy Conservatism
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	1945 (1890)	S&D	Social democracy
FDP	Free Democratic Party	1948	ALDE	Liberalism
GREENS	Alliance 90/The Greens	1980	GREENS-EFA	Green politics
LINKE	The Left	2007 (PDS 1990+WASG 2005)	GUE-NGL	Left
AFD	Alternative for Germany	2013	European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	National conservatism, right-wing populism



## Parliamentary elections in Germany (Bundestag, 2. vote)

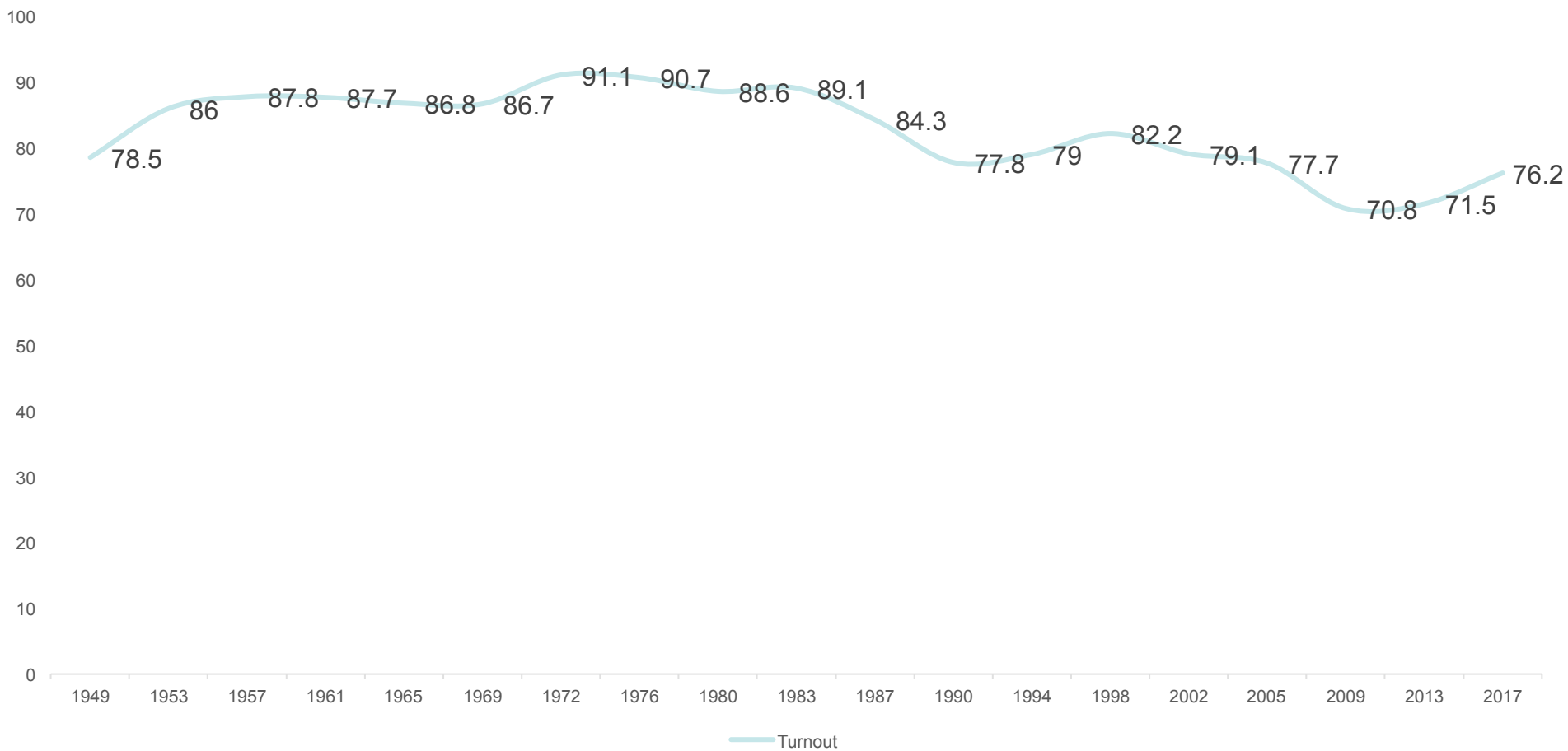


## The 2017 election in Germany (Bundestag, seats)





## Elections in Germany (Bundestag, turnout)



## Government

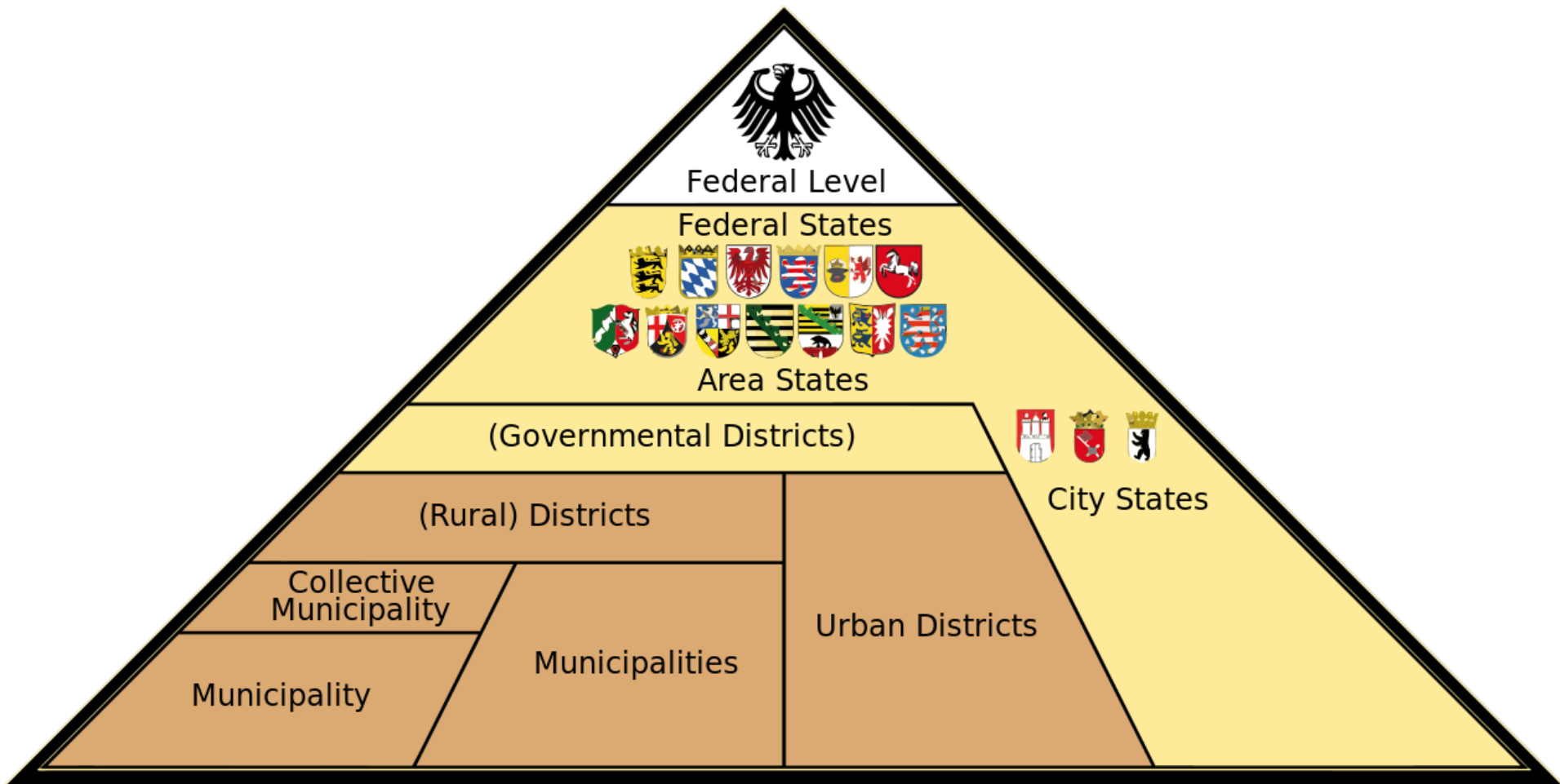
### Chancellor and his/her cabinet

- Translates the decision of the parliament into law
- Chancellor elected by the Bundestag (Richtlinienkompetenz)
- Vote of confidence (happened twice, success rate 50 %)

	Period	Party	Coalition
Konrad Adenauer	1949-1963	CDU	Various
Ludwig Erhard	1963-1966	CDU	CDU/CSU+FDP
Kurt Georg Kiesinger	1966-1969	CDU	CDU/CSU+SPD
Willy Brand*	1969-1974	SPD	SPD+FDP
Helmut Schmidt*	1974-1982	SPD	SPD+FDP
Helmut Kohl	1982-1998	CDU	CDU/CSU+FDP
Gerhard Schröder	1998-2005	SPD	SPD+GREENS
Angela Merkel	2005-	CDU	CDU/CSU+SPD CDU/CSU+FDP



# Federalism





## Federalism

Name	Inhab./in Mio.	Government	Name	Inhab./in Mio.	Government
Baden-Württemberg	10,95	GREENS, CDU	Niedersachsen	7,95	SPD, CDU
Bayern	12,93	CSU	Nordrhein-Westfalen	17,89	CDU, FDP
Berlin	3,56	SPD, GREENS, LINKE	Rheinland-Pfalz	4,07	SPD, FDP, GREENS
Brandenburg	2,49	SPD, LINKE	Saarland	0,99	CDU, SPD
Bremen	0,68	SPD, GREENS	Sachsen	4,08	CDU, SPD
Hamburg	1,81	SPD, GREENS	Sachsen-Anhalt	2,24	CDU, SPD, GREENS
Hessen	6,21	CDU, GREENS	Schleswig-Holstein	2,89	CDU, FDP, GREENS
Mecklenburg- Vorpommern	1,61	SPD, CDU	Thüringen	2,16	LINKE, SPD, GREENS

## Constitutional court

- Based in Karlsruhe
- Arm of the law (Grundgesetz)
- Three tasks
  - constitutional complaint by citizens (Verfassungsbeschwerde)
  - check of newly implemented laws (Normenkontrolle)
  - Legal ruling on contested competences (Organstreit)
- Can ban political parties (happened 2x in the 1950s)  
→ NPD ban was not successful twice
  
- Federalism in terms of all courts (national, Länder and local courts)



## Direct democracy

- Only minor elements of direct democracy
- Mainly on the local level (Smoking ban in restaurants in Bavaria 2010: yes 61,0 , Stuttgart 21: yes 57,1 %)
- Two types of a mandatory binding referendum on the national level:
  - Changing the constitution and in changing the state territories

# The political system of Austria

Wake-up question #2:

- What do you know about Austrian politics?



## Historical legacies

	Germany
1804-1918	Habsburg Empire
1914-1918	WW1: from a local conflict to a global war (fighting e.g. vs. IT and in the Balkans) “German Austria” not allowed to join Weimar Republic 1919: Ban of the aristocrats
1919-1934	First Republic: first democratic steps (social democrats vs. conservatives, massive societal tensions) → Economic crisis (1929) → Chancellor Dollfuß’ authoritarian rule (bans parties)
1934-1945	Austro-Fascism: 1934 coup d’état, 1938 joining Nazi Germany
1939-1945	WW2: part of Nazi Germany
1945-1955	Independence in April 1945 – occupied until 1955
1955-1995	1955: Second republic, neutral by the Austrian State Treaty
1995-present	1995: Austria joins the EU

## Key institutions

(Semi-presidential) Republic of Germany

1. Legal frame – Bundesverfassung (“federal constitution”):
2. Legislative: Nationalrat und Bundesrat (bicameral system)
3. Political parties
4. Executive: Government + president
5. Judiciary
6. Federalism: 9 Länder

## Bundesverfassung

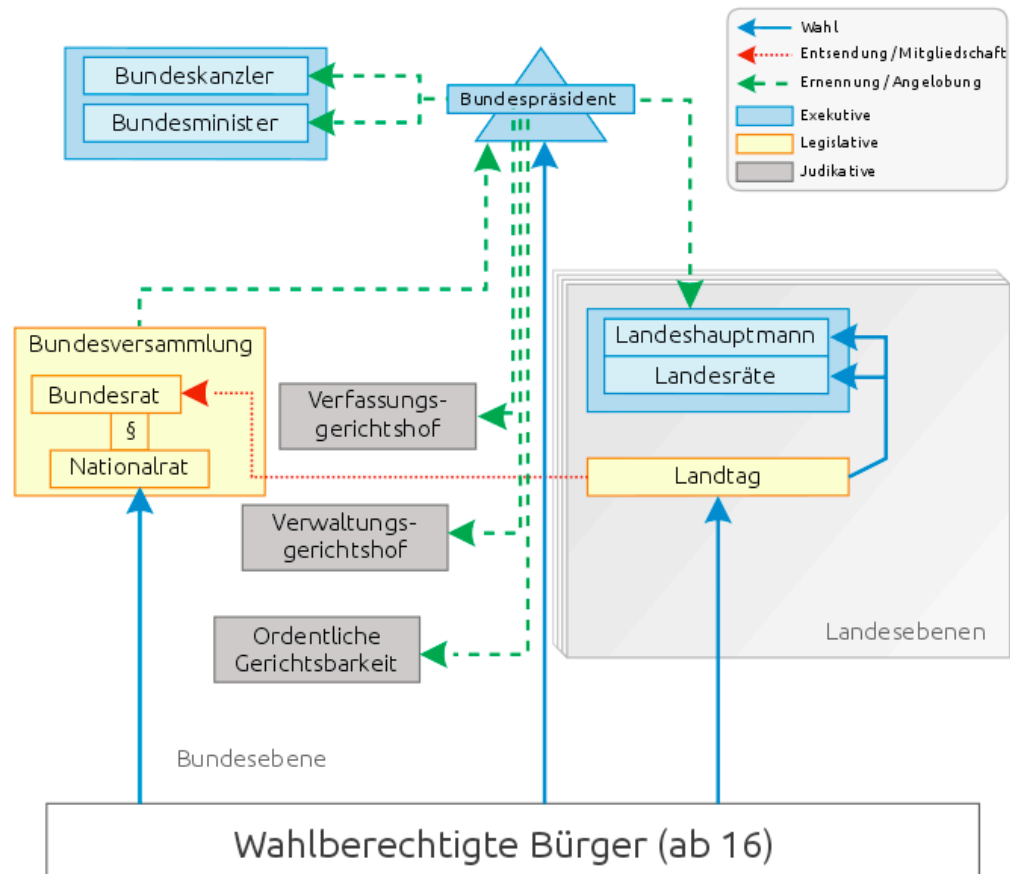
Constitution (1920) is based on four principles:

- Democracy
- Republic (head of state is the president, elected every six years)
- Rule of law (checks and balances etc.)
- Liberalism (fundamental and human rights)

→ Consensus democracy

→ difficult for any single actor to assert his or her will

## The political system of Austria



## Nationalrat/Bundesrat

### Nationalrat (183 members)

- More important chamber
- Elected every five years (since 2007)
- Free mandate for MPs (in theory)

### Bundesrat (61 members)

- Second chamber
- Appointed by the Länder
- Weak veto power (only in the case the law directly influences the Länder)
- But free mandate (in theory)

## The electoral system

Not so easy again: one vote, plus “Vorzugsstimme”

Nationalrat: 4 % threshold

- Age: +16
  - Federal, Länder (9) and regional list (39): proportional representation (PR)
  - Citizens can favour one person on the regional and Länder list (each)
- No split ticket



## The electoral system

Not so easy again: one vote, plus “Vorzugsstimme”

Nationalrat: 4 % threshold

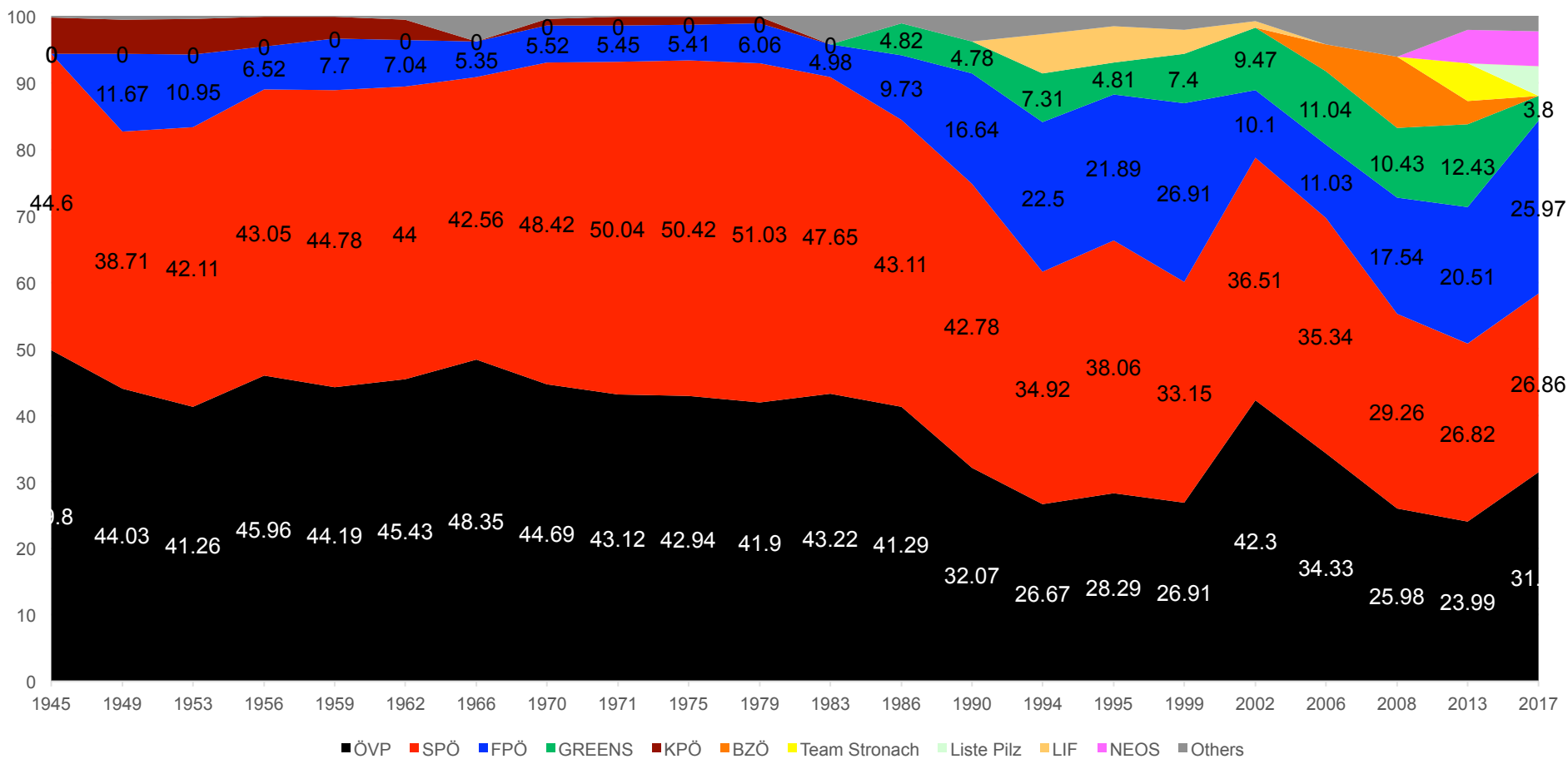
- Age: +16
  - Federal, Länder (9) and regional list (39): proportional representation (PR)
  - Citizens can favour one person on the regional and Länder list (each)
- No split ticket

Distribution of seats

- Start with the regional level (favoured candidates can be moved higher)
  - Länder: Distribution of seats (minus the first level)
  - Federal level: parties, which received more seats in the first two levels, keep them, rest is distributed among the other parties
- No overhang seats on the federal level

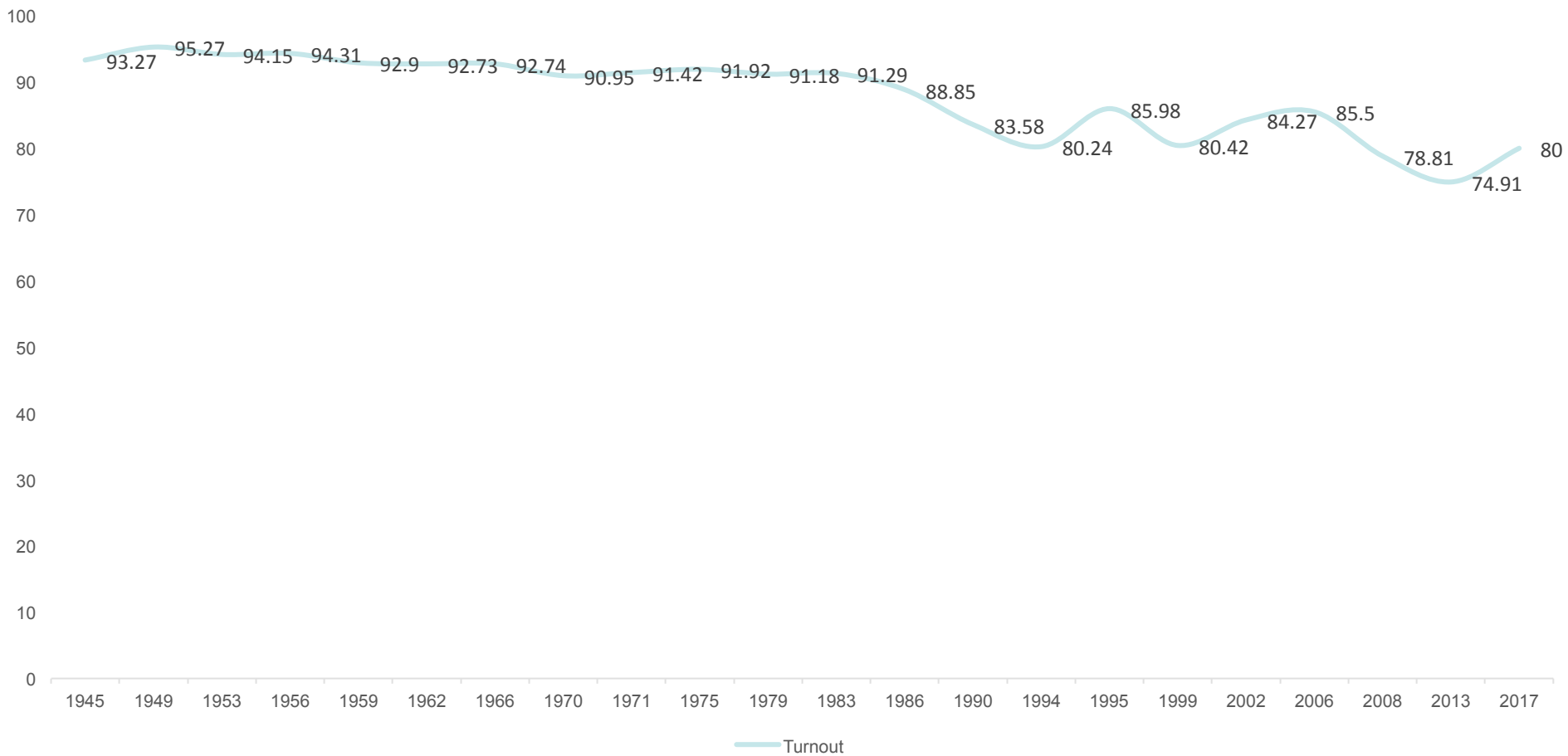


## Parliamentary elections in Austria (Nationalrat)



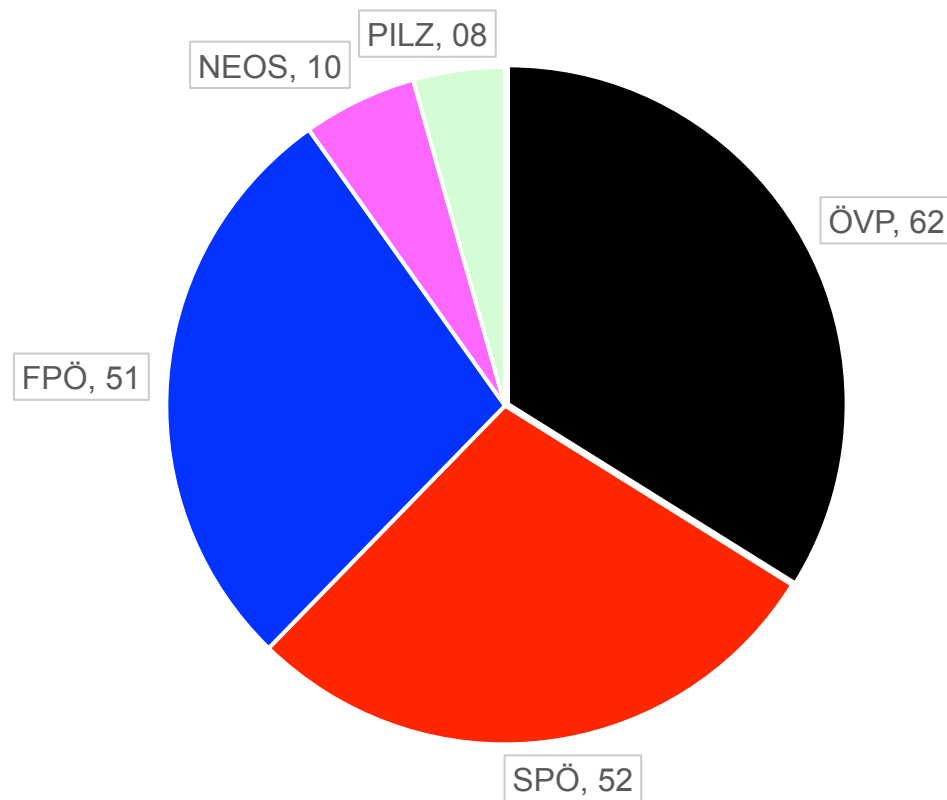


## Elections in Austria (Nationalrat, turnout)





## The 2017 election in Austria (Nationalrat, seats)



## Political parties

Abre.	Name	Found	EP	Position
ÖVP	Austrian People's Party	1945	EPP	Christian democracy Conservatism
SPÖ	Social Democratic Party of Austria	1945 (1918)	S&D	Social democracy
FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria	1955 (1949)	ENL (Europe of Nations and Freedom)	Right-wing populism National conservatism
GREENS	The Greens - The Green Alternative	1980	GREENS-EFA	Green politics
NEOS	The New Austria and Liberal Forum	2012	ALDE	Liberalism
PILZ	List Pilz	2017	-	Green politics

## Federal President

Federal president: powerful but hardly used

- Is part of the executive
- Can dissolve the parliament (upon request)
- **Can dissolve the government**
  
- 6 years term, can be re-elected once by popular vote
- Two rounds if no absolute majority in round one
  
- De facto mainly representative functions
- Approves laws
- **Appoints the cabinet**

## Government

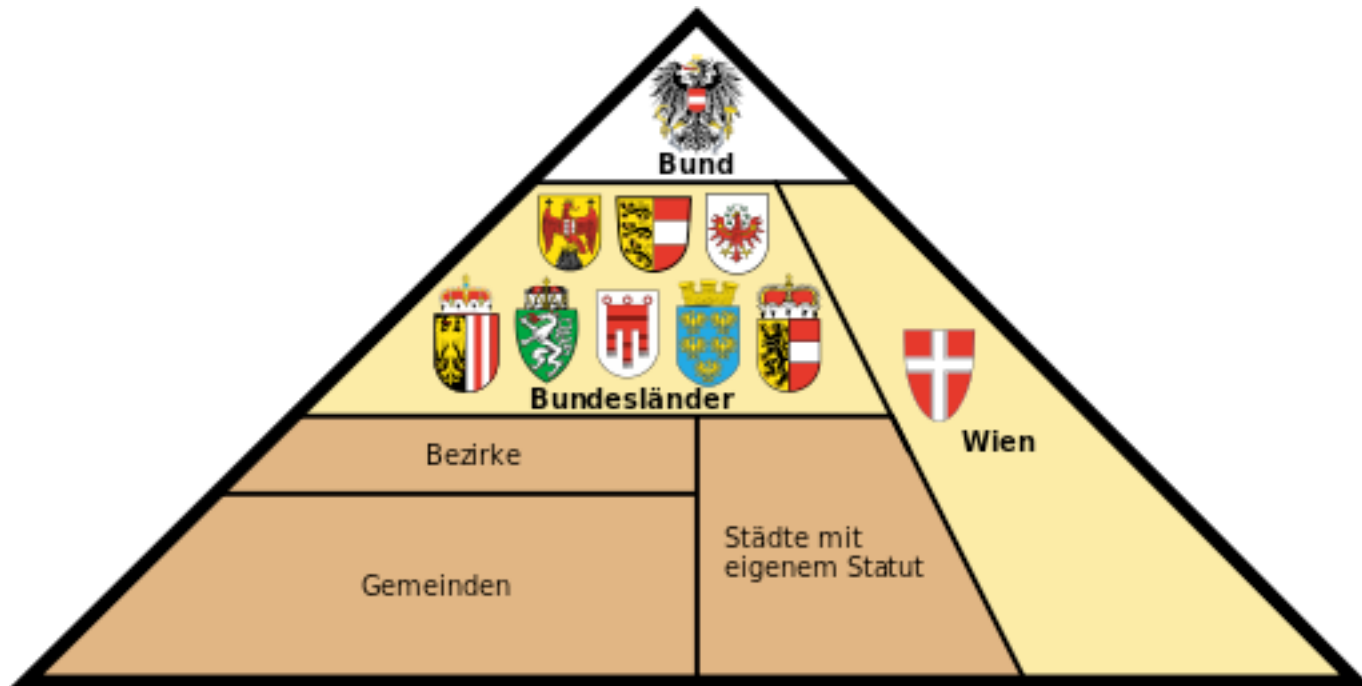
### Chancellor and his/her cabinet

- Translates the decision of the parliament into law
- Chancellor appointed by the president (no Richtlinienkompetenz)
- Vote of confidence (never happened)

	Period	Party	Coalition
Leopold Figl	1945-1953	ÖVP	ÖVP+SPÖ+(KPÖ)
Julius Raab	1953-1961	ÖVP	ÖVP+SPÖ
Alfons Gorbach	1961-1964	ÖVP	ÖVP+SPÖ
Josef Klaus	1964-1970	ÖVP	ÖVP+(SPÖ)
Bruno Kreisky	1970-1983	SPÖ	SPÖ
Fred Sinowatz	1983-1986	SPÖ	SPÖ-FPÖ
Franz Vranitzky	1986-1997	SPÖ	SPÖ-FPÖ/ÖVP
Viktor Klima	1997-2000	SPÖ	SPÖ+ÖVP
Wolfgang Schüssel	2000-2007	ÖVP	ÖVP+FPÖ (BZÖ)
Alfred Gusenbauer	2007-2008	SPÖ	SPÖ+ÖVP
Werner Faymann	2008-2013	SPÖ	SPÖ+ÖVP
Christian Kern	2013-2016	SPÖ	SPÖ+ÖVP
Sebastian Kurz	2017-	ÖVP	ÖVP-FPÖ



# Federalism







## Federalism





## Federalism

Name	Inhab./in Mio.	Government	Name	Inhab./in Mio.	Government
Burgenland	0,29	SPÖ+FPÖ	Steiermark	1,24	SPÖ+ÖVP
Kärnten	0,56	SPÖ+X	Tirol	0,75	ÖVP+X
Lower Austria	1,67	PR (ÖVP)	Vorarlberg	0,39	ÖVP+GREENS
Upper Austria	1,47	PR (ÖVP+FPÖ)	Wien	1,87	SPÖ+GREENS
Salzburg	0,55	ÖVP+GREENS			

## Constitutional court

- Based in Vienna
- Arm of the law (constitution)
- Two tasks
  - constitutional complaint by citizens (Verfassungsbeschwerde)
  - check of newly implemented laws (Normenkontrolle)
- No federal approach to courts (all courts are part of the federal level)

## Direct democracy

### Volksbegehren (petition)

- 1/1000 of the population must support the petition
- One week to support the petition (> 100 000 signatures)
- Nationalrat must deal with it
- but not binding
- Frequently applied (public broadcasting, smoking ban, Austria first 1992-1993)

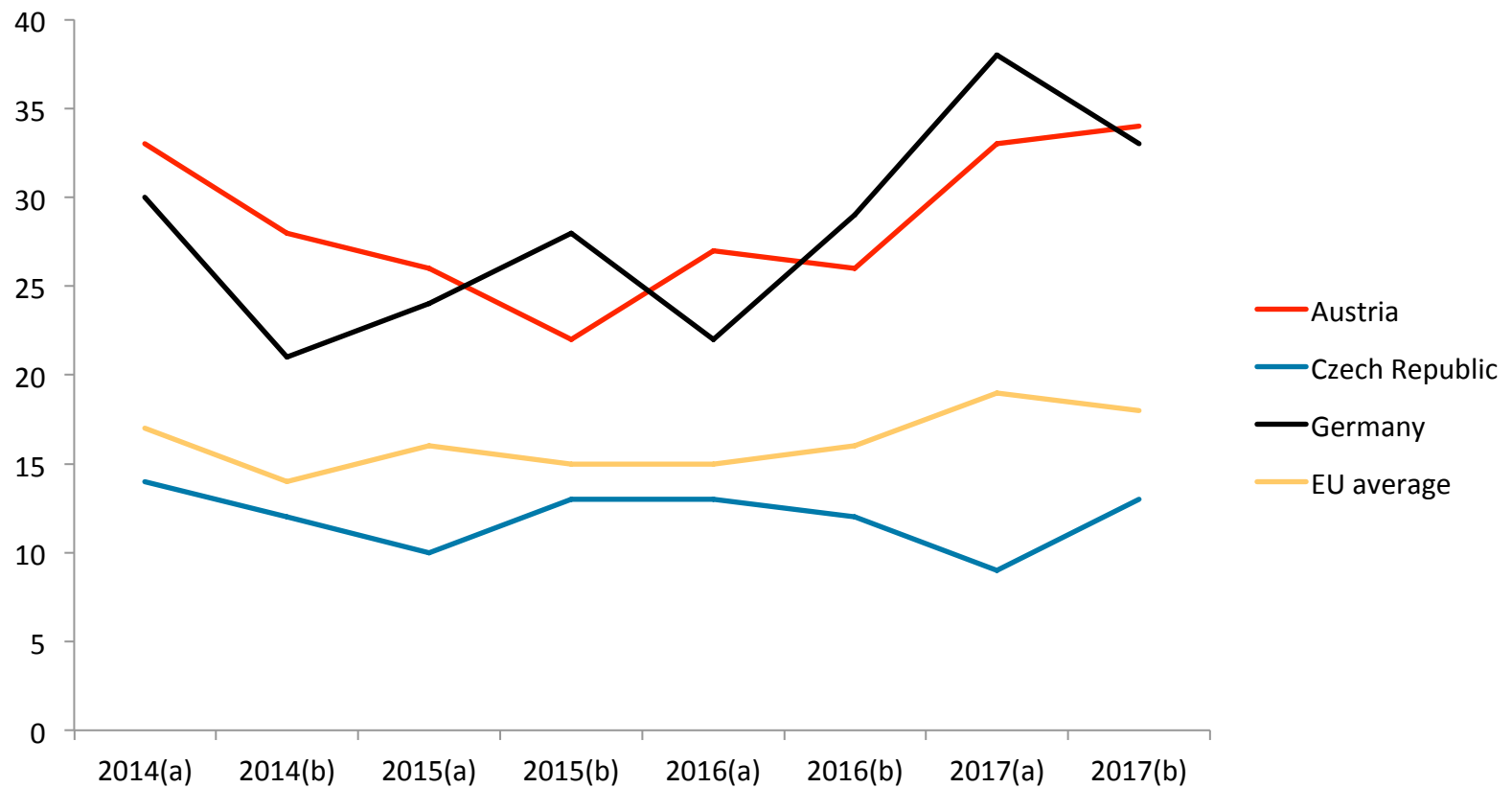
- Volksabstimmung (plebiscite)
- Parliament lets the people vote on a law
- Binding
- 2x (Zwentendorf 1978, no: 50,47 %; EU 1994, yes: 66,6 %)

### Volksbefragung (referendum)

- The parliament asks the population about their opinion on a law
- Not binding
- 1x (Conscription 2013, yes: 59,7%)

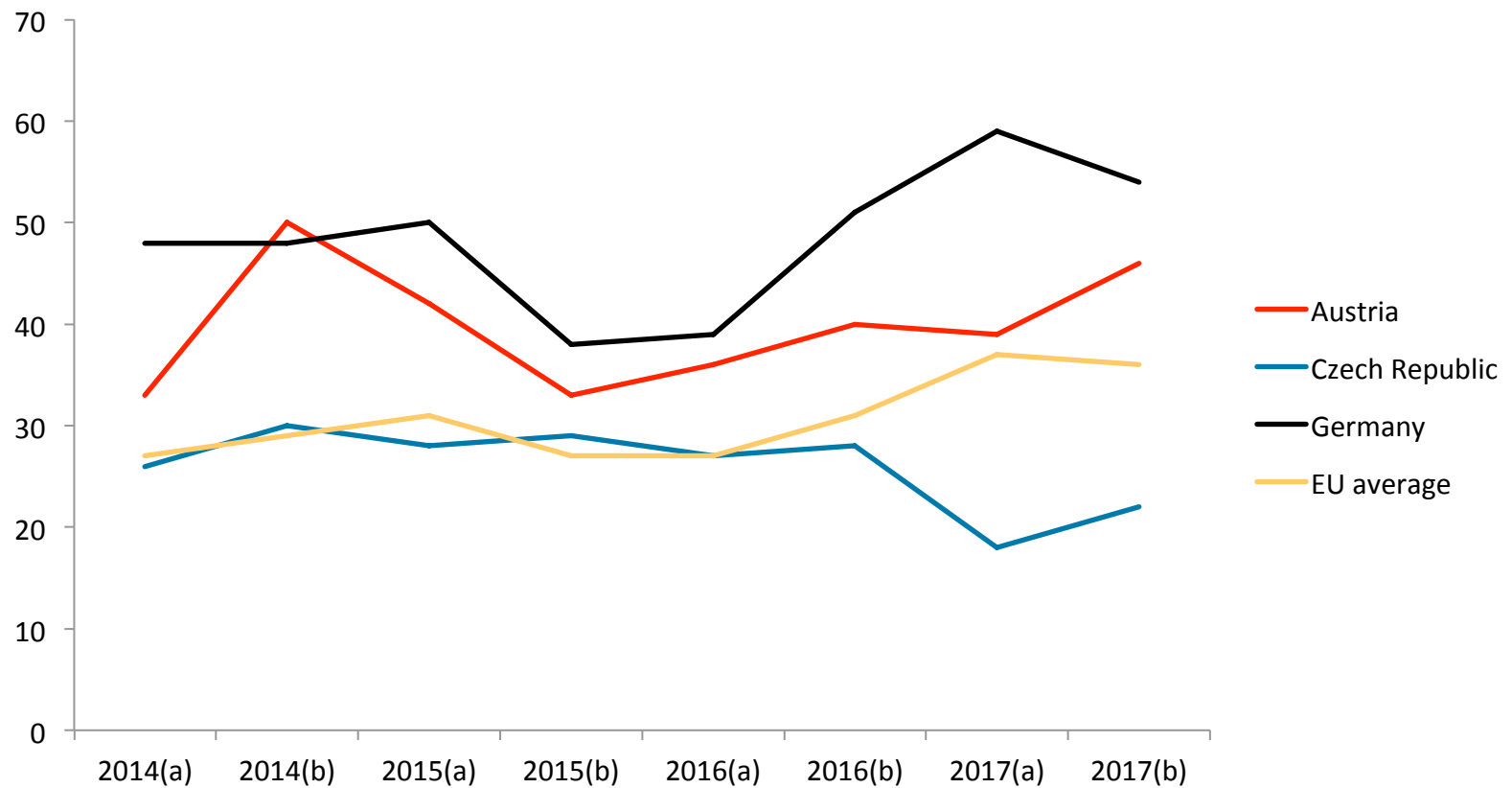


## Trust in parties





## Trust in government



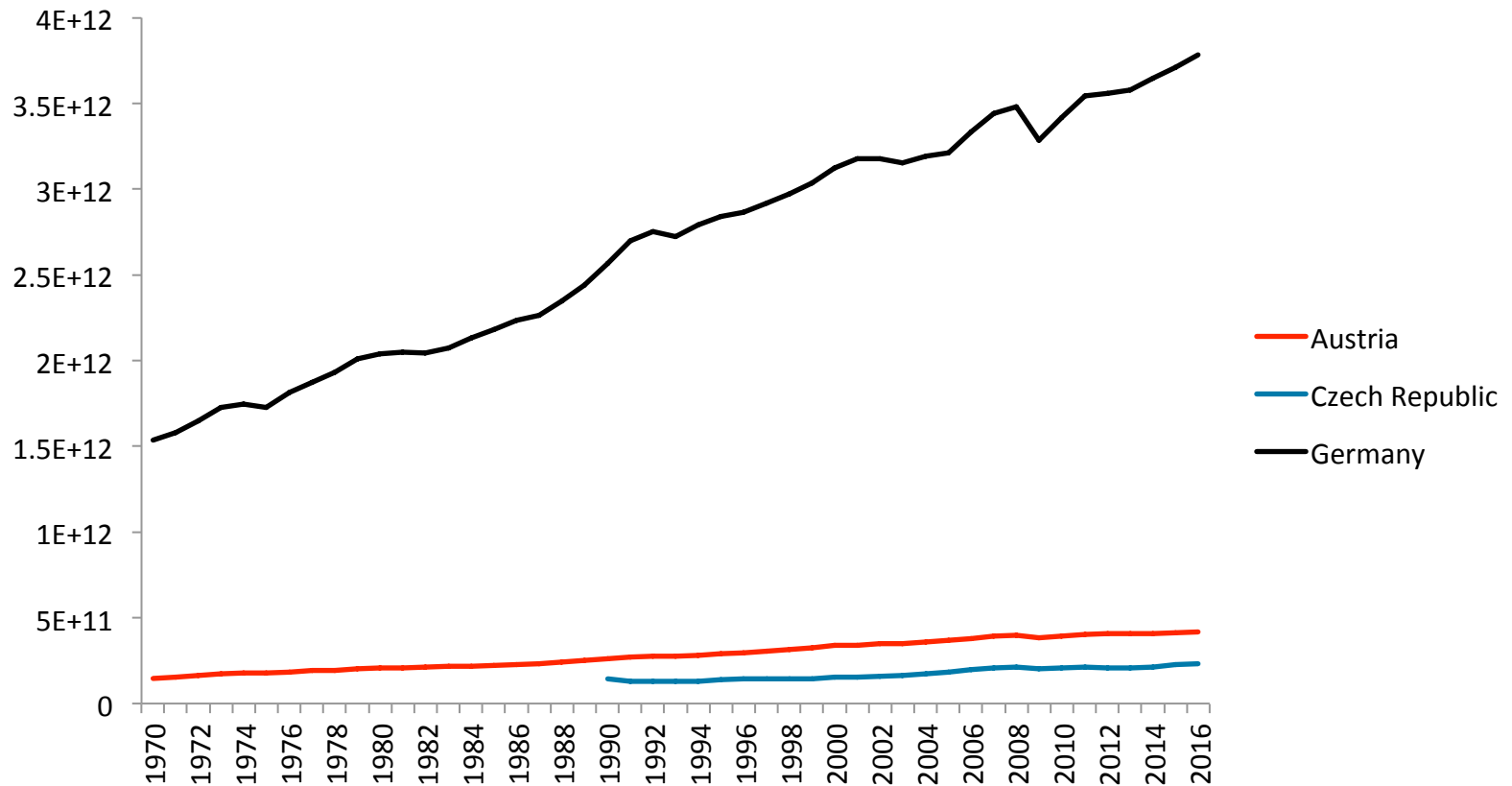


## The economic development by comparison





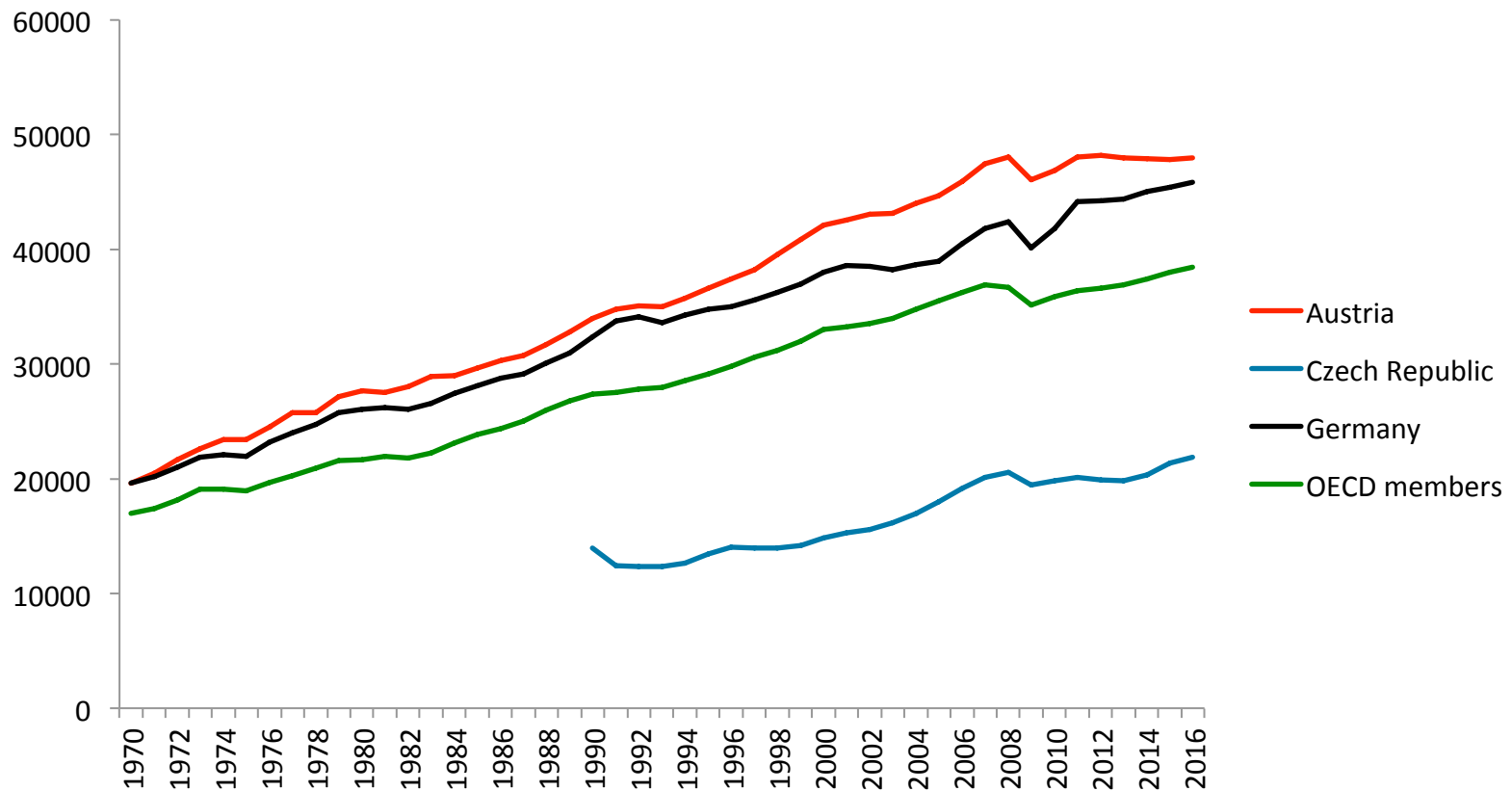
## GDP (constant 2010 US\$)





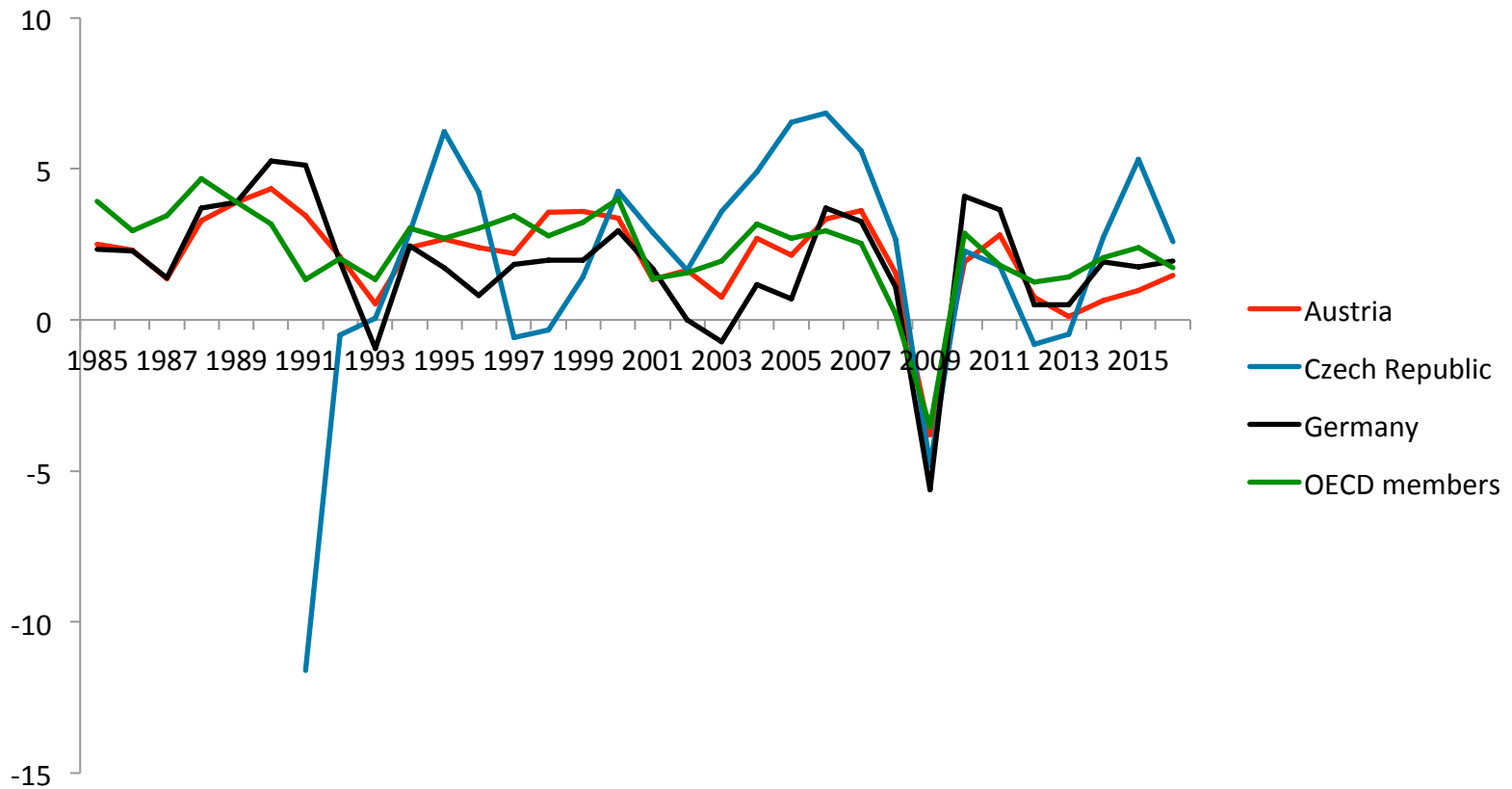


## GDP per capita (constant 2010 US\$)

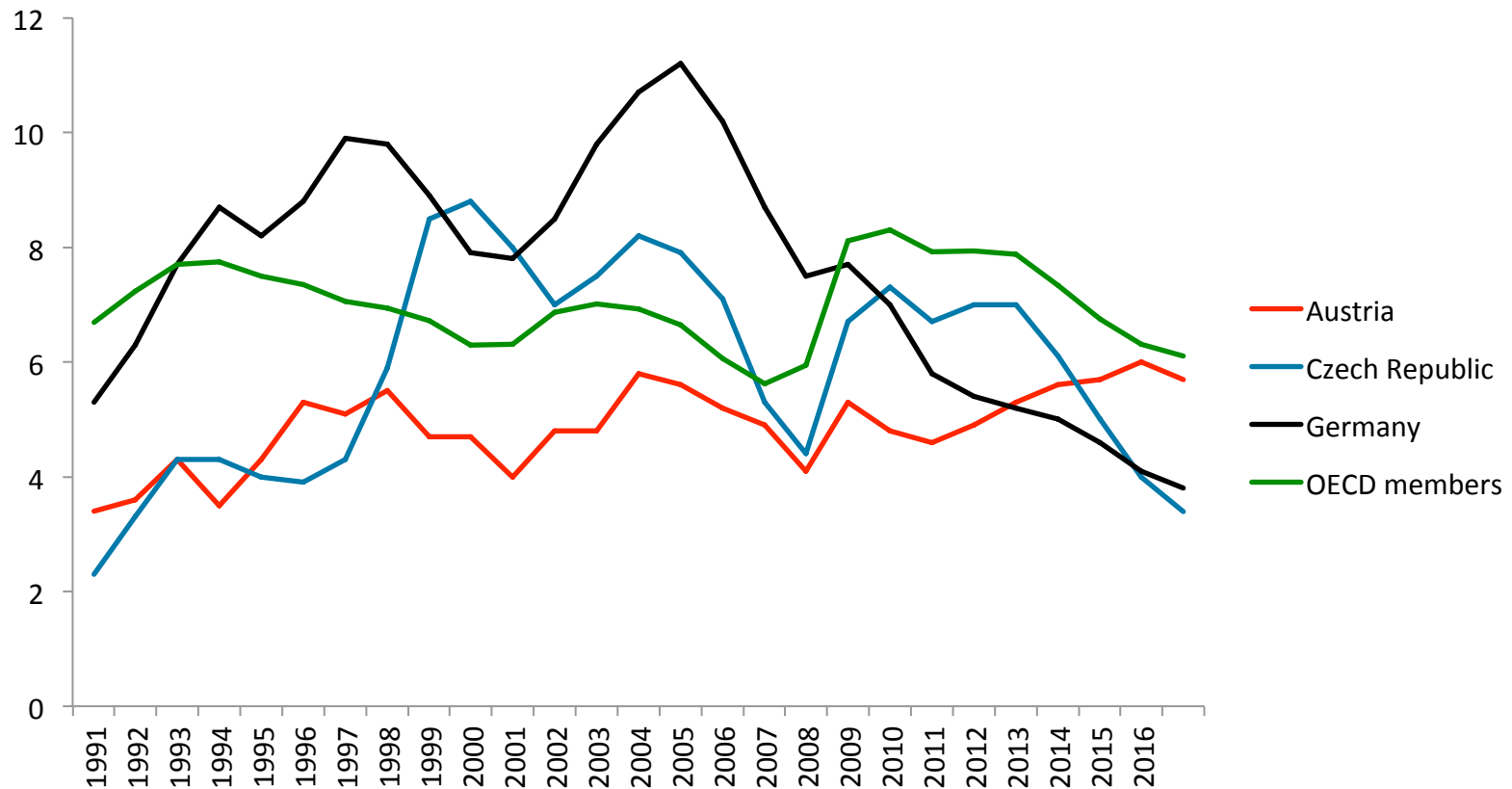




## GDP growth



## Unemployment (% , total labor force)





## Germany and Austria in the European Union



## Germany and Austria in the European Union

### Germany

- Founding member (1951, European Coal and Steel Community)
- (NATO member since 1955)

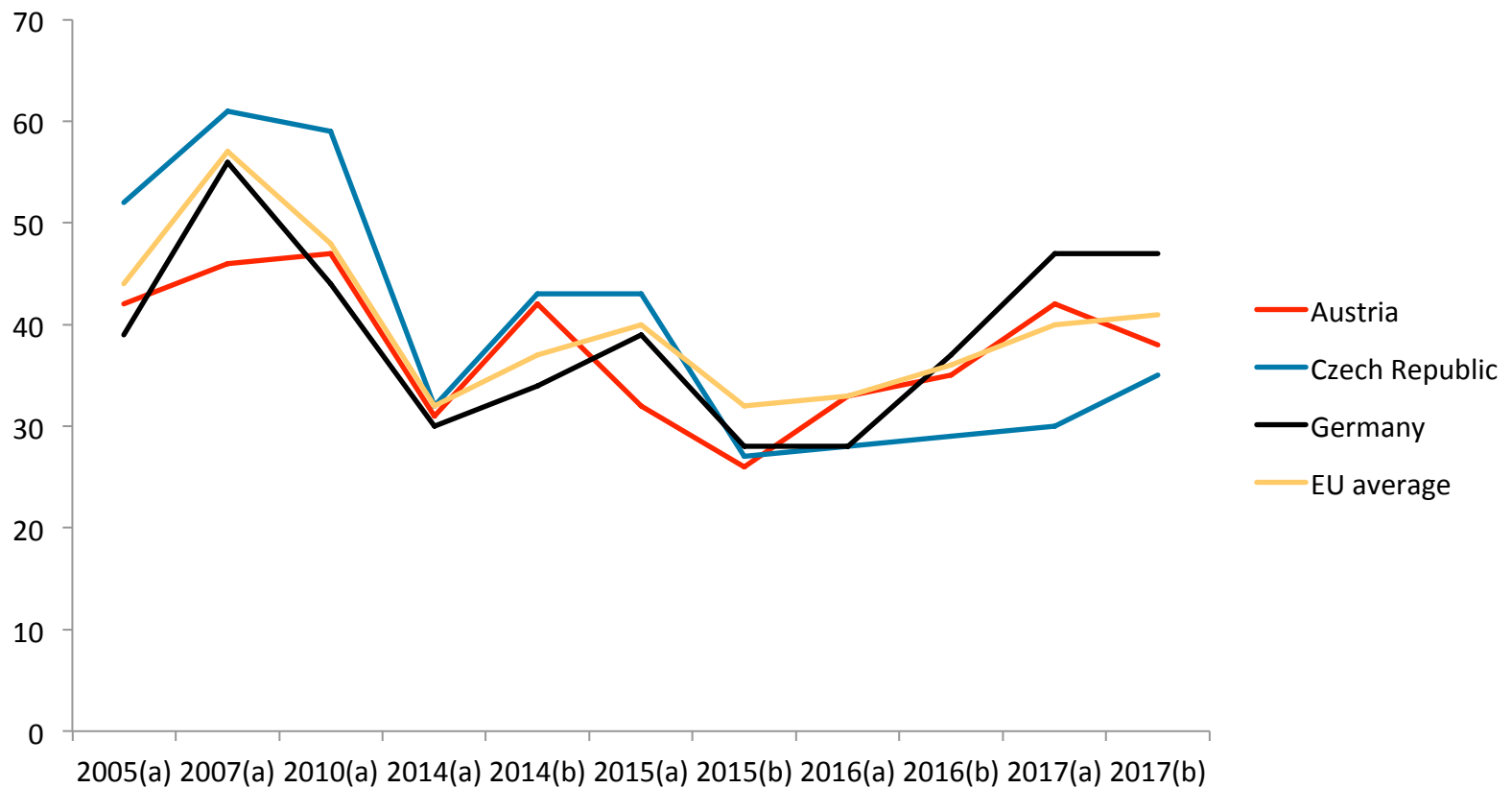
### Austria

- Joined in 1995 (with Finland + Sweden)
- (Neutral)

- Members of the Schengen area
- Part of the Euro zone
- Both countries highly benefit from the Common market
- Including the Eastern enlargement

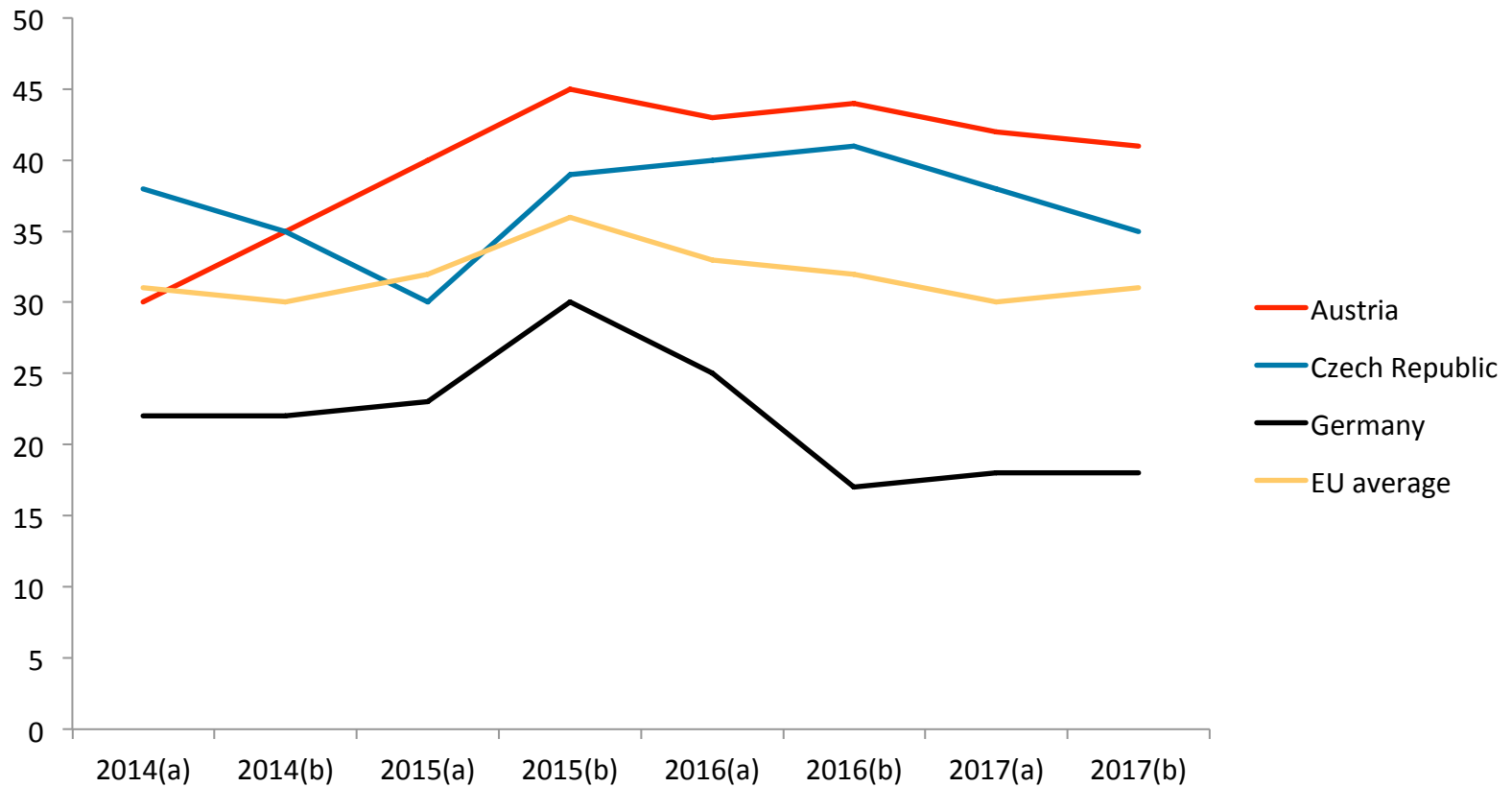


## Trust in the European Union





## Country better outside the EU



## Agenda

### Day 1

- The political system of Germany
- The political system of Austria
- The economic development by comparison
- Germany and Austria in the European Union

### Day 2

#### Contemporary German and Austrian Politics

- Most important developments in recent years
- Parliamentary elections in 2017: Campaigns, results, coalitions