

“Apprentices’ Parliament” initiative: Parliament simulation for apprentices

Austria

[Was ist das Lehrlingsparlament? LP \(reininsparlament.at\)](http://reininsparlament.at)

[Apprentices Parliament | Parliament Austria \(parlament.gv.at\)](http://parlament.gv.at)

DESCRIPTION

The Apprentices' Parliament **aims to increase the interest of students in political and democratic decision-making processes and improve their understanding of parliamentary procedures.**

Each year the initiative invites apprentices from across the country to spend two days at the Parliament, where they learn about and experience the **process of law-making**. During the simulation, participants learn to **exchange, voice their opinions, defend their points of view and negotiate**, while gaining a **first-hand impression** of how political decisions are made in the real parliamentary setting.

The participants are divided into four fictitious parliamentary groups, each developing its position on a fictitious draft law. They elect a chairperson, designate their representative for committee deliberations and they try to find a position that the majority of all members of the Apprentices' Parliament can agree on. The draft law is presented and voted during the **plenary session at the National Council meeting room.**

During the process, young people are assisted by members of the Parliament, experts on the topic and parliamentary administration staff. The plenary debate is also **live streamed** on the **Parliament's website.**

REFLECTIONS

The original initiative of the Youth Parliament, aimed at students aged 15-16 years, highlighted the **need for VET apprentices to have their own platform**, where they could discuss **topics** that were **relevant to them**. This led to the creation in 2015 of the Apprentices' Parliament, which also considers **organisational requirements of participating VET schools and companies**. These requirements include, for example, varying weekly and monthly school schedules, an 8-hour working day for the program and the potentially older age of the apprentices.

IMPACT

In terms of the impact of the activity, **evaluations** have been carried out together with universities through **direct feedback** from **students and teachers**, and **regular exchanges with experts** from various fields. Studies have confirmed a **correlation between participation in elections and increased engagement with Parliament**, for example through participation in relevant workshops or guided tour of the Parliament.