

Democracy and Science Week for Polytechnical schools

Austria

[Bundesministerium für Bildung](#)

DESCRIPTION

In Austria, **polytechnical schools are part of the VET school system**. The polytechnical school year is the final mandatory school year for students who do not continue in secondary higher school or a vocational school in upper secondary education.

The main goal of the Democracy and Science Week for polytechnical school students is to foster positive experiences with scientific topics, processes and results. In addition to that, students should learn that **accepting scientific findings gives an essential framework for democracy and negotiation processes**, which are key elements of democracy.

In 2023, during the Democracy and Science Week polytechnical schools, **schools were asked to plan their own projects and/or participate in online workshops focusing on scientific topics**. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research organised the **online workshops, which were delivered by young scientists** via the ZOOM Events platform.

Preparation for the 2023 Democracy and Science Week (held from June 12th to 16th) began with an opinion poll involving all students within the polytechnical school system. The aim of the poll was to gather **students' opinions and attitudes towards topics related to democracy and science**. Additionally, **students were asked to identify the specific science and democracy topics they were interested in and motivated to learn more about**. The results of the opinion poll served as the baseline for designing the content of the Democracy and Science Week. Throughout the organisation process, it was important to keep the polytechnical schools regularly informed about the content of the online workshops. Schools were also encouraged to organise their own programs for their students.

For the online workshops, two resources were especially helpful: first, **an Austrian organisation that maintains a catalogue of scientists willing to work with students of all ages** (<https://youngscience.at/de/>); second, the use of the ZOOM Events platform, which made it much easier to deliver workshops effectively for both students and scientists.

The factors contributing to the success of the Democracy and Science Week were motivated scientists, an up-to-date online workshop platform, and an appropriate communication and integration strategy involving all relevant school stakeholders (federal state administrations, school headmasters, teachers, and students).

In 2023, around 34% of the polytechnical schools participated in the online workshops organised by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.