

TruSD 10-point programme to strengthen trust in science and democracy in Austria

1. Study on the causes of science and democracy scepticism in Austria

Carrying out a first-time academic study on the causes of scepticism towards science and democracy in Austria, taking into account the historical, socio-economic (age, gender, origin, values) as well as the systemic and structural (education system, science system, political system, media and the public) dimensions, in order to lay the scientific foundations for possible future areas of intervention.

2. Central office for science and democracy education

Establishment of a central point of contact in Austria for science and democracy education in cooperation with the OeAD, the Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation. This agency is already involved in numerous activities and programmes (e.g. Citizen Science, Young Science, Children's Universities, erinnern.at (programme for teaching and learning about National Socialism and the Holocaust)).

3. Database for science and democracy education opportunities

Creation of a comprehensive database (as comprehensive as possible) containing science communication and democracy education opportunities in Austria, in order to strengthen trust and interest in science through low-threshold access to offers and to stimulate debate and interaction of stakeholder groups with science and research.

4. Science meets school/school meets science

Expanding and strengthening cooperation in the field of science and democracy education across institutional boundaries: This concerns in particular cooperation of schools with universities, research institutions and with key institutions for democracy policy (e.g. parliament, provincial parliaments, courts of law, memorial sites, national parks, museums). In this context, we are working on new formats such as school science weeks, modelled on school sports weeks.

5. Contacts for science and democracy education at schools

Establishment of a network of contacts for science and democracy education at schools; carried out in cooperation with the nine education directorates in the nine Federal Provinces.

6. Science and democracy ambassadors

Scientists become science and democracy ambassadors through their regular, voluntary engagement in democracy and science education; this takes place through the gradual expansion and extension of the OeAD Young Science programme and the Young Science Ambassadors, leading up to such activities being increasingly anchored at institutional level at all universities, research institutions and other science and democracy education institutions, thus ensuring that as many scientists as possible reach out to young people.

7. Science and democracy education in teacher training

Science and democracy education as a fixed component of initial, further and in-service teacher training: to this end, the existing range of courses at teacher training colleges and universities should be expanded and extended.

8. Embedding science and democracy education more strongly in all curricula

Embedding science and democracy education more strongly in all curricula: To this end, the existing range of courses at universities and colleges should be reviewed and adapted accordingly. In any case, science and democracy education should be more strongly anchored in the performance agreements of public universities.

9. Creating incentives for researchers

Creating incentives for researchers to become more strongly involved in science and democracy education: This requires short-term incentives as well as a fundamental, long-term paradigm shift. The achievements of scientists need to be re-evaluated (new career paths, employment patterns).

10. The media as central partners in science and democracy education

Strengthening communication and media skills at schools, universities and research institutions through the support by, and professional cooperation with, communication experts; this includes, in particular, dealing with social networks that are currently popular among children and young people.