DEMOCRACY QUARTER
Guided tours and info points
Welcome to the Democracy Quarter!

The Parliament building, a magnificent edifice planned by Theophil Hansen, was constructed between 1874 and 1883 and now requires a full and lasting renovation. All six parliamentary groups unanimously voted in favour of renovation works in 2014. In addition to substantial maintenance works to overhaul the 130-year-old Parliament building, the plans are intended to create a building which is open and transparent as well as suitable for a contemporary form of parliamentarianism.

It is self-evident that a parliament building is first and foremost the venue where parliamentary business is conducted – ranging from submitting legislative drafts to discussions in plenary sessions of the two Houses of Parliament. Additionally, the Austrian Parliament has become established as a centre of political, scientific and cultural discourse in recent years, annually attracting tens of thousands of visitors. A special focus has been placed on teaching the values of democracy: children and teens are the target group of special workshops; they may become MPs for a day in a youth or apprentice parliament or get to know the Parliament on special guided tours.
During the ongoing long-term renovation of the historic Parliament building, these opportunities to obtain a first-hand insight will be continued and indeed expanded by the creation of new info points.

This booklet provides you with an initial overview of the Parliament’s adapted and new visitor facilities. It will also help you navigate through the newly developed Democracy Quarter, which extends from the Parliament building on the Ringstrasse boulevard to the Hofburg.

Please ask at the info points for our compact map containing an overview of the Democracy Quarter and our information materials for specific target groups, such as children and youngsters.

Welcome to the new Democracy Quarter - we hope you enjoy your visit!
During the renovation of the historic Parliament building, there will be various locations where parliamentary business will be conducted and visitors can obtain information; these locations make up the new Democracy Quarter. The centre of Austrian democracy is now situated between the Info Point Bau.Stelle directly on the Ringstrasse and the main entrance on Josefsplatz square.

Guided tours will take visitors to the chamber of the National and Federal Councils (the two Houses of Parliament in Austria) in the Hofburg, and to Palais Epstein. The detailed renovation plans can be viewed at the Info Point Bau.Stelle directly on the Ringstrasse, while the Info Point Platz.Mit.Bestimmung on Heldenplatz provides
visitors with an interactive and entertaining introduction to the history of democracy and parliamentarianism in Austria. **Plenary Sittings** of the National and Federal Councils are open to the public (access via the main entrance on Josefplatz on days when Parliament is in session).

The **Parliament Library** and the **Democracy Workshop** for children and teens are also part of the **Democracy Quarter**. For further information please go to our info points or the main entrance on Josefplatz. Information is also available at [www.parlament.gv.at/ENGL/SERV/BIBL/](http://www.parlament.gv.at/ENGL/SERV/BIBL/) and [www.demokratiewebstatt.at](http://www.demokratiewebstatt.at) (German only).
Democracy Quarter at a glance: view over the pavilions on Heldenplatz to the Hofburg from the roof of the historic Parliament building
Guided tours and attending sittings of Parliament

The Parliament offers various guided tours and will continue to do so during the renovation works in the historical Parliament building on the Ringstrasse. These tours focus on details of the history of parliamentarianism and democracy, information on the rooms and halls and their artistic decoration as well as their use for parliamentary business. Visitors may participate in guided tours at two locations: the chamber of the two Houses of Parliament in the Hofburg, and Palais Epstein. The guided tours are free of charge. Please note that you will need a ticket if you want to participate in a guided tour. Tickets can be obtained at the main entrance on Josefsplatz and the Info Point Platz.Mit. Bestimmung, as well as at the Info Point Bau. Stelle.

The Parliament offers guided tours on specific topics and for various target groups. For further information please refer to our website at www.parlament.gv.at and to our information material.

Guided tours in the Hofburg

Public guided tours will be offered in the Hofburg. In the Hofburg, you may visit the plenary chambers of the National and Federal Councils and the adjacent rooms.

Public guided tours (German and English):

- **Monday** 10:45 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m.
- **Tuesday** 10:45 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m.
- **Wednesday** 10:45 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m.
- **Thursday** 10:45 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m.
- **Friday** 10:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m.
- **Saturday** 10:45 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:45 p.m., 4:45 p.m.
Please note that there are no guided tours on Sundays or public holidays. Due to certain requirements of parliamentary business, there are also some other days when there will be no guided tours.

For up-to-date information on the days without guided tours and other useful tips please refer to our website at www.parlament.gv.at under the section „The building and guided tours“.
Guided tours of Palais Epstein

The Parliament offers guided tours of Palais Epstein. Public guided tours are free of charge and start on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at the Info Point Bau.Stelle directly in front of the historic Parliament building on the Ringstrasse, just a short walk from Palais Epstein.

Tickets for guided tours of the bel etage (first floor with principal living quarters) of Palais Epstein can be obtained at the Info Point Bau.Stelle (opening hours: Mondays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

Attending plenary sittings

The plenary sittings of the National and Federal Councils are held in the Grosse Redoutensaal in the Hofburg and are generally open to the public. Visitors are invited to follow the sittings from the gallery of the plenary chamber. As a general rule, attendance is limited to one hour. Please refer to our homepage at www.parlament.gv.at for the current dates of sittings.

Before accessing the gallery, visitors have the opportunity to
obtain information about the schedule of the current sitting, its agenda and the list of speakers. Members of the Parliament’s staff will be in attendance to answer any questions you might have.

**Registration**

Normally there will be seated accommodation for **individual visitors** without advance reservation. Reservation is, however, required for **groups** of more than three people.

• by email: besucherservice@parlament.gv.at
• by phone: +43 1 401 10-2400 (visitors’ gallery)

The **attendance** of plenary sittings is **free of charge**, though you will still need a **ticket** to be admitted. These tickets can be obtained at the **main entrance on Josefsplatz**, where you need to present **photo ID**. The **minimum age is ten**, and young people aged up to 14 have to be accompanied by an adult, though the Parliamentary Administration can make an exception in justified individual cases.

**Sound and video recordings** of sittings of the National and Federal Councils are **not allowed**. Cameras and other recording equipment must be left in the cloakroom. It goes without saying that **mobile phones must not be used** in the chamber.

**Persons with disabilities** can attend debates without problems, since the meeting hall provides **space for wheelchairs** as well as an **audio system for hearing-impaired visitors**. Visitors with impaired mobility (wheelchair users) should be **accompanied** so that they can be evacuated via the stairs in emergencies, since lifts must not be used in case of fire.

**The Parliamentary Administration** can make **aides** available to assist **unaccompanied wheelchair users**. In such cases, registration **three working days in advance** is essential:

• by email: besucherservice@parlament.gv.at
• by phone: +43 1 401 10-2400 (visitors’ gallery)

Please refer to [www.parlament.gv.at](http://www.parlament.gv.at) for a detailed **description of access routes** for **persons with disabilities**.
New info points and main entrance on Josefsplatz

Info Point Bau.Stelle

You can find the new Info Point Bau.Stelle directly in front of the historic Parliament building on the Ringstrasse. Information about the necessary renovation works and details of the plans can be obtained here. You may also take an interactive tour of the new plenary chamber as it will look when completed and try out the seats which will be installed at the MPs’ desks.

The info point also houses a Parliament Shop where you can purchase souvenirs and books on parliamentarianism and democracy. Information materials are also available here.

You can also obtain tickets for guided tours of Palais Epstein and the Hofburg at the Info Point Bau.Stelle.

Please note that Info Point Bau.Stelle will be the starting point of the free guided tours of Palais Epstein.

Opening hours
Mondays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Two pavilions have been erected on Heldenplatz as temporary quarters: the pavilion „Burg“ (referring to the Hofburg) and the pavilion „Ring“ (referring to the Ringstrasse). The pavilion „Ring“ houses the Parliament’s democracy workshop for children and teens.

The pavilion “Burg” houses the Info Point Platz.Mit.Bestimmung, where visitors are invited to find out more about Heldenplatz, its history and its archaeological details. In addition, visitors may participate in an extraordinary interactive project: in cooperation with Ars Electronica Solutions Linz a wall has been covered with information on the history of democracy and parliamentarianism in Austria. It includes quotations from important people, brief historical outlines and informative illustrations. Visitors are invited to have a look at the plenary chamber from a new perspective, watch videos of youngsters explaining how you can become an MP or sound the bell for a call to order.

Last but not least, the pavilion houses a Parliament Shop where information materials, postcards, interesting publications and special souvenirs are available. You can also obtain tickets for guided tours of Palais Epstein and the Hofburg at the Info Point Platz.Mit.Bestimmung.

Opening hours
Mondays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Main entrance on Josefsplatz

The main entrance on Josefsplatz is the **central starting point** if you want to join a **guided tour of the Hofburg** or **attend plenary sittings** of the National and Federal Councils.

In the **Parliament Shop** visitors can obtain information materials on democracy and parliamentarianism and buy publications and souvenirs.

**Tickets** for public **guided tours** (free of charge) of the **Hofburg** and **Palais Epstein** are, of course, also available here. **Tickets** to **attend plenary sittings** of the two Houses of Parliament can only be obtained here.

**Opening hours**
Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
General information

For security reasons visitors will be checked by means of walk-through metal detectors and will need to pass their briefcases, bags, coats, etc. through scanners.

Please leave all objects that might present a threat (such as umbrellas etc.) in the cloakroom.

Larger bags cannot be taken into the building. On account of the limited space available, these cannot be stored at the main entrance either. Security checks may take some time – we apologise for any inconvenience.

For general information on visits, special guided tours on specific topics and the guided tours on offer at Heldenplatz please call +43 1 401 10-2400 or contact us via email at besucherservice@parlament.gv.at or via our website at www.parlament.gv.at

Opening hours

Main entrance on Josefsplatz
Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Info Point Platz.Mit.Bestimmung
Mondays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Democracy Workshop
Appointment required: +43 1 401 10-2930
demokratiewerkstatt@parlament.gv.at

Parliament Library
Mondays to Saturdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
www.parlament.gv.at/bibliothek

Info Point Bau.Stelle
Mondays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Contact
phone +43 1 401 10-2400
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website www.parlament.gv.at

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