



# Right to Democracy



Federal Ministry  
for Foreign Affairs  
of Austria



**“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government...”**

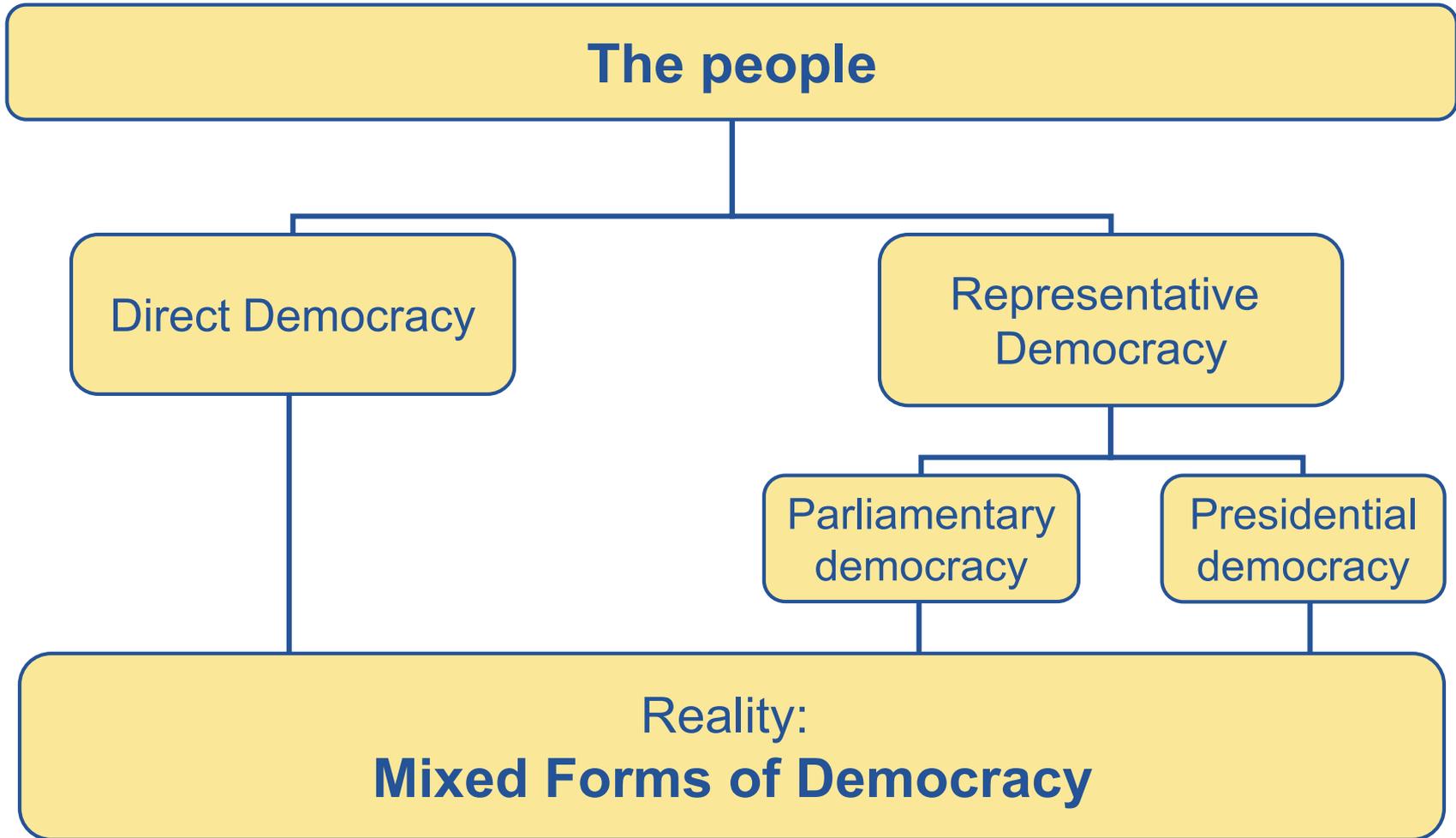
**Art. 21, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.**

- ▶ **Democracy** ⇒ “demos” - Greek for “People”.  
⇒ “kratos” - Greek for “Power”.
- ▶ **17<sup>th</sup> century**: principles of Modern Democracy develop in Scotland, England and Holland.
- ▶ **1776**: first democratic state established in the USA.
- ▶ **20<sup>th</sup> century**: democracy in crisis, authoritarian regimes, long and strenuous decolonisation process.

# Elements



# Forms of Democracy



## Intercultural Perspectives



Right to Democracy

- ▶ **Eurocentrism** is criticised.
- ▶ **Asian Values:** society models do influence the kind of democracy implemented, often very different, especially in Asia  $\implies$  clash of models.
- ▶ **Challenge of Democracy in the Muslim world:** religion and state are closely connected posing problems in various fields.
- ▶ **Other fields of interests:** relationship between majority and minority, civil society role, freedom and independent of the media, link with human rights.

- ▶ **Regional Courts**, such as the European Court of Human Rights.
- ▶ **OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**: election monitoring, help to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions.
- ▶ **Inter-Parliamentary Union**: founded in 1889, facilitates networking between parliaments.
- ▶ **UNDP Human Development Report** includes data on democracy.
- ▶ **Committee on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)** may consider state as well as individual complaints.

- ▶ Democracy is on the rise (see Human Security Report 2010).
- ▶ Women's political participation has increased by 40% over the past 10 years.
- ▶ Misuse of democratic instruments is a challenge: e.g. use of the internet to disseminate ideas not compatible with democracy (e.g. Ku-Klux-Klan)
- ▶ Globalisation: contra-events to WTO or G8-Summits: World Social Forum.
- ▶ Democracy deficit in International Organisations.