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PRESS RELEASE (<http://democracyranking.org/wordpress/>)

The results of the new Democracy Ranking 2016:

The Austrian newspaper THE PRESSE has already exclusively reported (online on February 16, 2017, and in-print on February 17, 2017).

<http://diepresse.com/home/ausland/aussenpolitik/5170935/Die-globale-DemokratieRangliste>

The Democracy Ranking 2016 compares the **development of quality of democracy** in 112 countries during the years 2011-2012 with 2014-2015. It is based on the following dimensions: politics (weighted with 50%), economy (10%), ecology and environment (10%), gender equality (10%), health and health status (10%), and knowledge (10%). The possible values that a country can achieve go from 1 (minimum) to 100 (maximum) (the entire scale is thus 1-100).

The following items of the key results of the Democracy Ranking 2016 should be emphasized:

1. **The ten top-ranked countries for 2014-2015 are:** Norway (87.1), Switzerland (86.7), Sweden (86.2), Finland (86.0), Denmark (85.1), the Netherlands (83.3), New Zealand (81.4), Germany (81.3), Ireland (80.9), and Australia (80.5).
2. **Improvement Ranking, the increase of quality of democracy:** A relatively large progress (although often resulting from a lower level) was in several African countries (Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Senegal, and Burkina Faso), in Latin American in Nicaragua and Columbia, as well as in Tunisia. Tunisia is the only country of the Arab Spring that could realize a positive (and by tendency stable) path to more democracy.
3. **Improvement Ranking, the decrease of quality of democracy:** A decrease can be observed for all the other countries of the Arab Spring (for example, Libya and Egypt), as well as for Venezuela (in contrast to

Columbia), and within the EU for Hungary. Furthermore the decrease of democracy in Turkey is remarkable and obvious. In Russia and China the quality of the political systems has also decreased.

4. **Austria:** Austria increased its scoring from 79.2 (2011-2012) to 79.9 (2014-2015), but slipped down slightly from rank 12 (2011-2012) to rank 13 (2014-2015). In international comparison Austria ranked very high (rank 13 from 112 countries). A few of the other top-rated countries developed during the last years a faster dynamic than Austria. Freedom House rated the political rights for Austria during 2014-2015 stricter than still for 2011-2012.

5. **Possibly approaching problem region of the Balkans:** The results of the Democracy Ranking also can be used in the sense of an early warning system for possibly arising problem situations. Serbia achieved an increase in quality of democracy (in the areas of politics, economy and society), yet apparently not enough to improve its negotiation position for an EU membership. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia the scoring for economy and society improved, but in the area of politics there was a decrease. Albania could increase its scoring for politics and society, but there was a decrease in economy. These recent trends in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Albania require a more intensive international attention and observation. The international environment could become more complex, if in addition the scenarios of a Trump-American retreat and a Putin-Russian expansion develop.