

English Translation of the speeches at the demonstration “Rechtsextremismus stoppen – Demokratie verteidigen” (“Stop right-wing extremism - defend democracy”)

Speech by Dr. Astrid Deilmann from Campact

- Hello Munich! You look great!

You are the proof: the times are over when we looked on resignedly and powerlessly at the goings-on of right-wing extremists. Since the beginning of the year, a wave of hope and confidence has swept through our country! Everywhere, people from the center of society are standing up. The agitators and dividers, the AfD and its right-wing extremist network are being met with a thousandfold opposition!

- I am particularly moved by the images of thousands of people on the streets in Zwickau and Bautzen, in Hoyerswerda and Pirna. The AfD thought it had stifled all opposition there with its climate of fear. But they were wrong. All of us here are eternally grateful to you, who are so courageously organizing opposition in right-wing extremist strongholds. This here, this is your applause!

- What is being shown there, what is being shown here in Munich today, is a defensive democracy. It will not stand by and watch as enemies of the constitution seek to destroy freedom of opinion and our constitutional state. Where the AfD is clearly anti-constitutional - in Thuringia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt - this Nazi party should be banned! That's the end of it!

- A defensive democracy also does not allow democrats to cooperate with right-wing extremists. Ursula von der Leyen has so far refused to rule this out. We say quite clearly: a democrat must not allow herself to be elected EU Commission President by parties such as the Spanish Vox, the Italian Fratelli and the Polish PiS. Ms. von der Leyen, draw a clear red line now, you don't make deals with post-fascists and right-wing extremists!

- And a defensive democracy does not stand by while the AfD denies the greatest threat to democracy - the climate crisis. Democracy and climate - they are mutually dependent: if the climate catastrophe continues to escalate, the social upheavals will eventually be so great that they will wash away democracies. Conversely, the major changes that will help to prevent such a catastrophe can only be implemented in a democracy.

- The AfD is joining forces with the other far-right parties and the conservatives to destroy the EU's climate protection program - the European Green Deal. We must not allow this to happen. Especially after the dramatic images of the last few days of the umpteenth flood of the century and many people who have lost everything, we are all called upon to vote out the AfD as an accelerant of the climate crisis. And to give our vote to climate protection and democracy!

- The good news is that we have really put the AfD on the defensive. Because more and more people are realizing that an AfD whose leading candidates allow themselves to be bought by Russia and China and spy for them is a party of traitors to the fatherland. An AfD whose hatred leads to members of other parties being beaten up is a party of thugs. An AfD that destroys the European unification project and calls for a dexit is a party of wealth destroyers. And an AfD that spreads SA slogans and relativizes the atrocities of the SS is a Nazi party!

- Let's all give this Nazi party a resounding defeat on Sunday - and use the next few hours to do so. Convince your friends, your relatives and your neighbors to go to the polls. Stop leaving Instagram and Facebook, X and TikTok to the far right and take a stand there. So that lots of people make crosses on Sunday, democratic crosses and, above all, crosses without hooks!

- Let's not elect rabble-rousers to parliament this Sunday, but representatives of the people! We will win the European elections - not the fascists!

Thank you very much!

Speech by Arif Haidary from *Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat* (“Bavarian Refugee Council”)

Today I would like to talk to you about the shift to the right and xenophobia in Germany and Europe and how these developments affect refugees.

German politics has changed a lot in recent years. More and more politicians are making racist and right-wing populist statements, and these voices are getting louder and louder. This worries me greatly, especially for the refugees who have already been through a lot.

There are several serious consequences of this development:

1. Germany and many other European countries are trying to abolish the individual right to asylum and deport more people.
2. violence against refugees: Compared to 2023, violence against refugees has doubled. Refugees are attacked and mistreated more often, whether on the street, on buses or in their accommodation. These attacks make them afraid and make it difficult for them to start a new life here.

We must not forget why these people are fleeing. They come from war zones, fleeing persecution and great hardship. They have lost everything and are hoping for a peaceful life. It is our job to give them this chance and protect them from further harm.

The shift to the right affects us all. We must fight together against racism and xenophobia and stand up for a fair asylum policy. It is our duty to offer refugees protection and support. Let's stand up together for a society based on humanity, respect and solidarity.

Thank you.

Speech by Claire Staudenmayer from Pulse of Europe

Thank you all for coming today to set an example against right-wing extremism and for democracy.

My name is Claire Staudenmayer and I am speaking today on behalf of Pulse of Europe.

Many thanks to the organizers of the “Stop right-wing extremism and defend democracy” demonstration. Thank you for your invitation, we Pulse of Europe are of course happy to be there.

Pulse of Europe is a non-partisan citizens' initiative. It was founded in 2016 across Germany and Europe. At that time, people came together - first in Frankfurt and then in many other cities - and said: Trump, Brexit, ... - we want to say something back to these nationalists. We don't want to be against something, but **for something**.

We are committed to a strong, united and democratic Europe. The greatest peace project the world has ever seen.

We are standing here with you today, one day before the European elections, because we are committed to Europe. We are committed to the preservation and further development of a united and democratic Europe. And we also want to counter the growing right-wing populist and nationalist tendencies in Europe.

Yes, Europe, the European Union, is not perfect. But it is the best thing that could have happened to us and we can all do a lot to further improve it. And that is why we and all of you are here again today, to set an example. For a common and democratic Europe.

We are facing a fateful election tomorrow. Because there is a lot at stake. The geopolitical situation is more tense than ever. More than ever we must act together, more than ever we need a strong Europe. More than ever, we must fear that anti-European, nationalist forces will win a significant share of seats in the European Parliament. Forces that aim to divide and dismantle the EU. We are in a time where authoritarian and foreign forces are interfering in our countries and waging a hybrid war against our countries. These forces want to attack our democratic, value-based models, they want to destabilize them. We must do everything we can to defend ourselves.

That is why we need a united, strong, sovereign and capable Europe more than ever. Only together can we get to grips with the many crises of our time (climate change, migration, wars). Europe, the European Union, stands and must continue to stand for peace, freedom, prosperity and democracy. And this must be preserved.

In 2019, voter turnout across Europe was around 50%. In Germany it was around 61%. That means 40% did not go to the polls. Our aim is to motivate non-voters in particular to go to the polls and vote for a pro-European party.

Because it depends on each and every one of us: Burying our heads in the sand or despairing or resigning ourselves to the magnitude and variety of today's crises is no solution.

Therefore:

1. go to the polls, vote for Europe by choosing a pro-European party!
2. help to motivate those who are still undecided to vote. If each and every one of you can convince 1-2 people around you to go and vote, you will have already won a lot. It is precisely these people who could tip the scales.
3. young people who are allowed to vote for the first time in this election must also go to the polls and vote for a pro-European party. This is because nationalist and populist groups are particularly successful in this generation via social media such as TikTok.

The achievements of the EU (peace, freedom, prosperity): After all, all of this would be at stake if we were to fall back into nationalism.

So let's vote FOR Europe tomorrow, for democracy, for our values, for our peaceful future.

Thank you!

Speech by Cat and Lis from *Bündnis Gemeinsam gegen Rechts* (“alliance Together Against the Right”)

It's good to see so many people here! It is good that you are here - it is important that you are here TODAY! But - let's be honest - we need you not only today, but also tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Why is that? A look at history shows: on January 25, 1933, 130,000 people demonstrated against the NSDAP. Five days later, however, power was handed over to Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor.

The lesson from this is that we will not stop the shift to the right by “demonstrating together” alone. It will take more. We need to take the step from opinion to attitude, from protest to active resistance.

It takes courage to break the right-wing wave. Courage is like a muscle - in order for it to grow, it needs to be constantly exercised. And the best way to do that is together. That's why we have joined forces in the “Gemeinsam gegen rechts” (“Together against the right”) alliance. Because we are stronger together, because we want to stay together. And we have to. Taking a stand against misanthropy and right-wing politics can be many things. Awareness-raising and educational work, loud protest and active resistance.

In the “Gemeinsam gegen Rechts” (“Together against the right”) alliance, we are not only fighting against the radical right-wing AfD. We are fighting against the complete shift to the right. And this is also reflected in the fact that migration, equal rights, diverse lifestyles, people with disabilities and people affected by poverty are being declared a problem. We must not repeat these narratives. We want an open and diverse society. Without social and economic discrimination. We want a life in which profit does not take precedence over people.

However, this also means that we must name and criticize contradictory positions, including in current government policy: It is hypocritical for the SPD to call the racist Sylt video “disgusting” while at the same time implementing deportations on a grand scale. It is also hypocritical to condemn attacks on politicians while remaining silent about racist, anti-queer or anti-disabled attacks.

We must oppose right-wing slogans. Always and everywhere. That takes courage. And we get it when we think about the future. If we keep in mind that a good world is possible and that we can actively contribute to it. If we don't surrender to our anger and despair, but use it. Let's turn anger into courage!

Anger - but also despair and fear - is not only felt by us at the moment, but by many people. Everywhere we look: Crises, wars, uncertainty. And hardly any viable solutions. Therefore - let's work together to remove the breeding ground for AfD and co. (Let's get involved, for example, in fights against high rents - in fights for climate justice, in queer fights and against any kind of back-stabbing!) Let's create organizations and structures together that can offer something to people who are worried about the future.

Let us be courageous. Where we live, where we work. Let us contradict and stand in the way of the right! Because the decisive lesson from the history of this country is: Resist the beginnings, resist them with all determination!

All together against fascism!

Speech by Uschi from OMAS GEGEN RECHTS (OMAS AGAINST THE RIGHT)

Dear citizens, dear Europeans, dear first-time voters,

I am speaking on behalf of the Munich OMAS GEGEN RECHTS, very old, older and also younger women.

We are non-partisan and see ourselves as contemporary witnesses, campaigners for a vibrant democracy, as “admonishers” against increasing right-wing extremist ideas.

I am an over eighty-year-old grandmother and in my long life I have experienced war, expulsion and discrimination, but also the economic rise of the Federal Republic of Germany and helped to build it up.

This happened in a functioning democracy in Germany and in the European Union. For a long time, I took this for granted and overlooked how right-wing extremist thinking is growing, violence and agitation are on the rise and endanger our democracy. One party - you all know it, the AfD - is trying to undermine our Basic Law by democratic means. I feel partly responsible for this development because I used to just stand by and watch.

That's why I joined the OMAS GEGEN RECHTS to stand up for our parliamentary democracy together with them.

We are old, but not silent.

(All OMAS on stage: being old does not mean being mute!)

Dear young voters,

For the first time, you are allowed to cast your vote in an election, the European elections, from the age of 16. This is a privilege, but also a great responsibility, because with this vote you are making a decision for your future.

That is why I call on you, young people: “Inform yourselves, don't follow populists”.

Young and old - together we want to/yes, we must work for the preservation and strengthening of our democracy, for a free, peaceful Europe, of which you are also a part under the postulate of our Basic Law:

“Human dignity is inviolable”.

Speech by Karl Kopp from ProAsyl

Defence of the EUROPA project: respect for human dignity, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These are the foundations of the EU. And, of course, this includes solidarity, non-discrimination and gender equality.

NO BOTTLE MAIL: This is what the EU Treaties say. These are not messages in a bottle mail or anything nice to have. These values and rights are securitised, but they are under threat. And we must defend these foundations, these legal guardrails. Because we want to live in an open society, in a migration society, in a society that welcomes people seeking protection with dignity.

NEVER AGAIN IS NOW! This means resolutely taking action against anti-Semitism, racism and other forms of group-based hostility.

Never Again! means defending the civilizational responses to barbarism, the Shoah, the millions of deaths: the Basic Law, the Geneva Convention on Refugees, the European Conventions on Human Rights and thus the protection against rejection at the borders. Never again should asylum seekers be turned away at the borders, back to the torture cellars of the Gestapo. One of these civilizational responses is the absolute prohibition of torture.

These human rights are the inalienable foundation of democratic societies. However, this is precisely what is being called into question in Europe today:

Everyday refusals, excessive violence against refugees and migrants at Europe's borders and those responsible remain unpunished.

Attacks on the independence of the judiciary

Attacks on freedom of the press

The criminalisation of human rights defenders, the criminalisation of humanitarian aid in the area of refugees – all this we see where right-wing populists co-govern or their agenda becomes government action.

If asylum seekers are drowned a thousand times over in the Mediterranean, people are forced to endure in misery without access to an asylum procedure, if members of minorities are defamed and physically attacked, Europe's human rights foundation will be destroyed.

We warn: The firewall against democracy – and enemies of Europe in Germany and Europe must not continue to erode!

The democratic parties of the centre must not copy the language and agenda of the enemies of Europe or even form alliances. This only strengthens Europe's enemies, the extreme right. This puts PROJECT EUROPA at risk.

What's this about? Human rights and human dignity are core elements of our coexistence, which we must never give up.

Drown boat refugees or save them from distress at sea? More barbed wire and walls or show a friendly face – does welcoming culture translate? Refugee deals with autocrats or legal escape routes? Total outsourcing of refugee protection – to Rwanda and elsewhere – or a common European human rights-based protection system? On all these essential issues, the EU, and therefore the future European Parliament, has a decisive role to play.

Therefore, we have a choice. In an appeal by Holocaust survivors it is said that it is now necessary to show together that the profession of "never again" is not a phrase, but a promise that is valid forever.

In the words of 81-year-old psychotherapist and paediatrician Eva Umlauf: »Use your voice and help me and others so that our memories remain only memories and never return.«