



Bürgervereinigung PAX Europa Austria

Working Session 8 Freedom of Assembly and association

Intervention on the topic Freedom of Assembly in Germany

Freedom of assembly, as we all know, is the individual right to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests. It is recognized as a human right, political right and civil liberty.

BPE Austria is concerned about the execution of this right in Germany. During and also many times before the last election campaign left wing extremist groups like ANTIFA were threatening those, whose opinion differed from their own.

In particular the new party *Alternative für Deutschland* was hampered in their election campaign in various ways:

- their election campaign posters were destroyed
- information stands were attacked and people beaten up (pictures of an AfD campaigner – a woman – with bruises in her face could be seen all over the internet)
- party leader Bernd Lucke was pushed from a stage by ANTIFA activists
- people who wanted to pick up information from AfD were scared away
- campaigners and politicians from AfD were falsely accused as NAZIs, right wing extremists, racists and Islamophobes

In particular the youth organisation of the Green party in Göttingen were out in force, destroyed information stands and intimidated the AfD candidates into silence. “I will accompany your child to school tomorrow” was only one of the various threats which caused the local candidates to step back out of fear for their families.

All these actions were announced in advanced on the ANTIFA platform indymedia and described in detail on the internet site of the green youth organization.

BPE Austria is extremely concerned that freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of speech can no longer be guaranteed in Germany.

Therefore BPE Austria recommends:



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- more and stronger protection by the law enforcement authorities
- banning violent ANTIFA groups from events
- consequent and strong punishments for left wing extremist groups who are trying to suppress different opinions and to limit basic rights
- OSCE monitoring especially for the upcoming elections to the European Parliament

While the name ANTIFA basically stands for Anti-fascist – but what they are actually doing has disturbing similarities to the situation during the Third Reich.