

Working session 10: **Freedom of Assembly remains challenged**

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I am Henrik Clausen, speaking on behalf of Wiener Akademikerbund, Austria. I will talk about Freedom of Assembly, which we have previously expressed concerns about.



Let me start with recommendations:

- That trying to destroy public events of others be made punishable in itself.
- That violent groups plotting attacks on public events be monitored by the police.
- And that the OSCE Freedom of Assembly guidelines be amended to not permit counter-demonstrations near the main demonstrations.

Then, two positive examples: In Russia, a proposed pension reform led to widespread and well publicized public protests, and the reform was then rejected in the parliament. This is how Freedom of Assembly works in a sound democracy.

In June this year, we held a public rally in Vienna, Austria, for traditional family values. Thanks to proper policing, the Antifa blackshirts who usually try to attack us were not to be seen, and a few hecklers were dealt with quickly. This is progress.

In Germany, however, things are still challenging. For a decade, conservative, constitution-friendly groups have routinely been assaulted by extremists, verbally and physically. This does not live up to proper standards for freedom of assembly.

Recently in Chemnitz, Germany, a mourning parade for crime victims organized by the political party Alternative für Deutschland were falsely accused of sympathy for National Socialism.

Given the evil nature of this ideology, such accusations should not be taken seriously, but they were. Suddenly, East Germans at large were accused of all kinds of evil, simply for voicing their dissatisfaction with neglect, crime and poverty.

Fortunately, due to citizen journalism and RT (I would like to thank RT for elaborate and professional coverage), it was easy to see that the accusations were unfounded. Citizens are unhappy with developments since 2015, and want to be taken seriously.

Conservative activists in Germany are so used to being lied about that they coined the term “Lügenpresse” about it. But while the press technically has the right to lie, government officials have a professional obligation to see through such lies.

We expect our governments to be honest and impartial on such matters in the future.