



## **Intervention by Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa**

### **OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Working Session 4**

Warsaw, September 21, 2016

## **Whither Freedom of Association?**

This year's Annotated Agenda notes “it is the responsibility of the participating States to ensure that individuals are always [...] able to take part in public debate [...] using available public fora.” In view of the above, BPE notes with grave concern the rising number of attacks against members of political parties and their aides, thereby infringing the right to freedom of assembly and association.

Recent examples of the challenges faced by political parties include the following:

### **Germany**

- Campaign aides for the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) are frequently attacked in public.<sup>1</sup>
- AfD party leader Frauke Petry's car was recently torched.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 <http://www.thelocal.de/20160831/afd-leader-attacked-and-beaten-in-mainz>  
<http://www.rbb-online.de/politik/wahl/berlin/agh/afd-wahlkampfhelper-in-berlin-kreuzberg-attackiert.html>

2 <http://www.dw.com/en/car-of-germanys-anti-immigrant-afd-leader-petry-torched/a->

- The AfD leader's house was defaced with graffiti.<sup>3</sup>

Austria:

- Campaign aides for FPÖ, the Austrian Freedom Party, frequently attacked.<sup>4, 5</sup>

In addition, members of the German parties Alternative für Deutschland and “Bürger für Frankfurt” have lost their jobs due to their memberships.<sup>6</sup> The German Office for the Protection of the Constitution ruled that the AfD was “not an object of observation and not right-wing extremist”, which did not stop a high-ranking member of the German Social Democrats from denouncing AfD members and voters as possessing a “right-wing extremist world view” and which must be fought politically and socially.<sup>7</sup> He added that, “respectable Germans must resist AfD”, by which he simultaneously insinuates Germans “indecenty”.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, there are reports of banks canceling bank accounts of critical groups (such as the Identitarians (Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs), who are generally branded as extremists without the provision of proof.<sup>9, 10</sup> There are those who disagree with what Identitarians stand for; however, this should not preclude anyone from being able to associate with such groups, especially since the Identitarians have to date not been

---

[19559016](#)

3 <http://chronik.blackblogs.org/?p=3351>

(This link is of particular interest as it provides the exact home address of Mr. Gauland.

There is also a call to violence: “No peace for fascists! Let’s smoke out nationalism!”

4 <http://www.heute.at/news/oesterreich/wien/FPOE-Wahlhelferin-20-nach-Party-attackiert;art23652,1224978>

5 <http://www.heute.at/news/oesterreich/wien/politik/Karmelitermarkt-Wasser-Attacke-auf-FPOE-Wahlkaempfer;art85916,1343386>

6 <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/rhein-main/afd-mitglieder-duerfen-nicht-bei-awo-arbeiten-14104708.html>

7 <http://www.merkur.de/politik/oppermann-afd-agitatoren-sollen-verfassungsschutz-beobachtet-werden-zr-6480492.html>

8 <http://www.pi-news.net/2016/06/oppermann-afd-agitatoren-beobachten-lassen/>

9 <https://pressefreiheit24.wordpress.com/2016/01/28/oesterreich-konto-kuendigung-fuer-asylkritiker-gratis-konten-fuer-illegale-einwanderer/>

10 Interestingly, the [Austrian Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands](#), which claims to collect information in “right-wing extremism”, fails to provide concrete evidence for the Identitarians' disposition to violence. As a matter of fact, peacefully protesting Identitarians have frequently been [attacked](#) by left-wing groups.

banned by the government or the state.

## **Recommendations**

BPE recommends

- that participating States ensure that supporters of political parties are not harassed, attacked, and injured.
- that participating States ensure that groups and political parties are not branded as “dangerous” and threatening to the constitutional order of a society, the state, or anyone else, without solid proof and due diligence worthy of a democratic society.