



Intervention by Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Vienna, April 17, 2015

Session II

Non-Discrimination and the Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly

We are grateful to the OSCE for the opportunity to speak out at forums such as this one.

In this context, allow me to note that there are also “downward spiral effects” seen recently in participating States west of Vienna. I very much appreciate your comments, Madam Introducer, however, I would like to remind everyone that there are many groups west of Vienna also taking to the streets with issues that authorities consider threatening.

There is harassment by the authorities, there is harassment by counter-demonstrations by left-wing extremist and, to some extent, Islamist groups. We are witnessing organized terrorism against peaceful assemblies.

Finally, we are witnessing smear campaigns mentioned by the introducer. Indeed,

both in Germany and Austria, but even more so, in the United Kingdom, participating States are using the court system to shut down critical voices. There are people such as Tommy Robinson, Michael Mannheimer, Michael Stürzenberger, and myself who have been taken to court by the state, without there being any victims, just to make a point and intimidate.

BPE thus makes the following recommendations:

- That so-called 'counter-demonstrations' be prevented from becoming rallying points for initiating street battles, for example by not permitting them to be held near the initial demonstration.
- That police and intelligence organizations make an effective and unbiased effort to identify precisely which groups promote threatening and violent behavior, and which do not.
- That police and other relevant authorities radically improve the efforts to protect peaceful assemblies, including any that promote controversial or unpopular opinions.
- That police authorities take effective measures to ensure that so-called 'counter-demonstrations' are not used as rallying points to initiate street battles.