

Dear Dresdeners, dear people from all corners of the country,

Over the last few weeks, I have had many conversations that were often characterized by resignation: “It's no use, you can talk your head off, nobody is listening anymore anyway”.

Dear people, I don't have to explain to anyone standing on this square why it is so important to get involved and take to the streets these days. But what we can do and should do again and again is to encourage each other. To build each other up. To help ensure that there are more of us who raise our voices and get involved. Yes, that's damn important, and yes, it makes an impression. Otherwise, the right-wing media wouldn't always go to such lengths to downplay our demonstrations and accuse us of faking the numbers. It makes a difference that we are here!

I came to Saxony in 2016, and I have a vivid memory of a demonstration from back then. PEGIDA was still mobilizing many people in 2016 and dominated many discussions as soon as things got political.

I think it was the third anniversary of that movement, and there was a counter-protest. There weren't tens of thousands, as there are today, but there were a few - several thousand.

When we arrived at the rally, we were greeted with the following words - and I quote: “It's great that we've come together here today. Even if there aren't that many of us again. There could have been a lot more people. But well, that's the way it is in Dresden.”

Dear people, I was quite moved by these words of welcome at the time. I remember them to this day. I think it's a great pity when activism - no matter at what scale – is made out to be insignificant.

An initiative, a movement, is not characterized by the fact that it is so powerful and assertive right from the start that it achieves its goal immediately. That wouldn't be logical, as the movement would then not need to exist in the first place.

And above all, it is important that we set ourselves realistic goals. If you are here to prevent radical right-wing parties from gaining power, then that is not a realistic goal. No matter what the parliament will look like after next week's election: they already have a large number of elected representatives in the municipalities, city councils and soon, of course, in the state parliament. And they largely determine the discourse in Saxony.

But what *is* realistic is to fill the word “firewall” with life. “Firewall” means: we are here to show that we will not accept the current situation and that we will fight for our values. That we will stand up for our democracy and defend it. That we will not back down, even when “they” become more. That their agenda of exclusion and contempt for humanity will be met by a resolute majority of democrats who stand together and support each other, and above all, raise their voices. That we need to take back the discourse.

Dear people, even if a demonstration might be significantly smaller than this one today – even if your party or initiative may not at this moment be in the majority; even if you are the

minority in discussions on human rights – remember this: we are so many and we have solidarity with each other!

We stand together today as unionists, as representatives of our party, our associations, our religious communities, our organisations. As citizens of Saxony. We stand together because we are fighting for a future worth living. That is the Firewall, that is solidarity – Glück auf!