

Hello, I'm Janina from Fridays For Future.

In a week, we will elect a new state parliament. And we are doing this at a time when the social climate is heated, political discourse has become more coarse, and right-wing extremist parties are growing stronger. That's why we are all here today. To defend our democracy.

But it's not only the social climate that is heated, but also the global climate.

July of this year was the hottest month ever recorded worldwide! In the last 30 years, Germany has experienced twice as many days over 30°C as in the previous 30 years. Last year, 47,000 people in Europe alone died from the effects of heat. These are impacts of the climate crisis. We are already living in it. We are all affected by it."

The climate is changing because we humans are releasing too many greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. That's a fact. If we don't make changes, the groundwater levels will continue to drop here as well, and the heat will become increasingly unbearable. Weather extremes like droughts and heavy rainfall will become more frequent. It's about completely overheated cities. It's about our food security. It's about our drinking water supply. These are all facts. This is all scientific consensus. And it affects us all!

In democratic discourse, no one really doubts the climate crisis anymore. Yet, in the election campaign, we see parties and politicians actively campaigning against climate protection. This is not only irresponsible but also dangerously reckless!

And we see that some parties and politicians act as if climate protection is merely a niche interest of some climate activists. That is completely out of touch with reality! The climate crisis is the most existential threat of our time. And it threatens all of us. Climate protection is a global responsibility and a human right. And it is damn well the responsibility of every single political actor to do everything possible to curb climate change and to create acceptance for these measures!

We need politics that acts and aims to implement a social and just transformation. Politics that puts the people first and does not help corporate executives line their pockets. It cannot be that LEAG digs enormous coal pits in Saxony, takes the profits, and then gets to shirk the consequences!

Financially, everything points to climate protection. The costs of damage from climate catastrophes will far exceed the costs of climate protection. And it is completely misleading to claim that climate protection and social policy are opposites. The climate catastrophe will hit those the hardest who already have the least money. We demand a climate protection law with binding sectoral targets. We demand a coal exit and 100% renewable energy by 2030, and we demand a mobility transition.

All parties have a responsibility to act. But we all know that some parties take this responsibility more seriously than others. To all of us who are here today, I know that when we stand at the ballot box next Sunday, we will cast our vote in a way that strengthens democracy. At this point, I make a pressing appeal to all of you: When you are in the voting booth, also consider the climate in your decision! The climate crisis will not become less severe just because politicians take it less seriously. We all benefit from a politics that regards climate change as a catastrophe. We all benefit from a politics that takes this catastrophe seriously and does everything it can to prevent it. So, cast your vote for climate protection!

Thank you.