

Dear people of Dresden, thank you for the opportunity to stand here with you today.

I have had the privilege of proudly calling Dresden my home for the past four years.

I came here to Dresden just over four years ago after being warned that I would be moving to the “Nazi capital.” On my first day here, I came across a demonstration in the Neumarkt square. We tried to understand what it was about, but every time I addressed the demonstrators in English, they ignored me. Finally, a demonstration official<sup>1</sup> came up to us and asked where we were from. When we said “Israel,” his eyes lit up and he said, “Ah, we also hate Arabs!” That startled me, because I don't hate Arabs, and so I went to the counter-demonstration. There were people demonstrating against them on the other side. I didn't know who they were then, but it was a Pegida demonstration, and on the other side stood their opponents.

The Pegida supporters were radical right-wingers, but on the other side were many more good people who had come to stand against their messages of hate.

Less than two months ago, the European Parliamentary elections reflected how hate has skyrocketed across Saxony, with the popularity of the far right increased alarmingly.

It is up to us to continue to fight for good, for a Saxony that is worth living in and good for all of us, for a Saxony that accepts both Jews and Muslims, that sees people as people and not as “the others.”

I am sure that everyone here will vote to strengthen democracy, but we have the power and the duty to do more for our democracy. Each of us can convince at least one person who is not planning to vote to cast their vote, multiplying our power and preventing radical forces from taking over and corrupting our democracy.

Thank you very much.

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<sup>1</sup> A volunteer helping the organizers