

On the campaign to delegitimise Andrej Hunko

Following my participation in a Council of Europe election observation delegation to Turkey, AKP supporters started a delegitimation campaign against me and are attempting to discredit me as a PKK sympathiser. This method has also been used in recent months as justification for the mass arrests and dismissals in Turkey. Among others, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has made comments to this effect. And yet as a former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, he knows that the PKK is not considered a terrorist organisation by the Assembly.

The aim is transparent: they wish to present my statements on the disputed vote as unreliable and distract attention from the fact that the referendum on 16 April was held under undemocratic and unfair conditions, with electoral fraud possibly even responsible for the close result. Anyone who doubts my statements is welcome to ask Stefan Schennach of the Austrian SPÖ for information. He was also a Council of Europe election observer in eastern Turkey. The [statement by the OSCE and the Council of Europe](#) is also clear on the matter.

For those wondering about the photo in which I am shown with a PKK flag: this was taken in October 2014 in protest against the criminalisation of the symbols of the PKK and many other Kurdish organisations. The rally in Cologne was not an expression of sympathy with the PKK, but instead of protest against the ban of the symbols of various Kurdish organisations, including the PKK. At the time, the organisation's Syrian branch had just saved the lives of tens of thousands of Yazidi people, threatened with genocide by the "Islamic State". At the time, I made a statement to the following effect: "Irrespective of the political assessment of individual organisations, we are against the criminalisation of Kurdish organisation symbols. We support the symbols banned today being shown again, for example this flag."

At the same time, incidentally, the Chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag, Volker Kauder, [called for](#) weapons to be supplied to the PKK.

The Left Party continues to demand that the PKK ban in Germany be lifted, and the organisation removed from the EU's list of terrorist organisations. We are of the opinion that the conflict can only be resolved peacefully. That is why we support both sides resuming talks, in order to reach a political solution through a peace process.

One more word on the supposed neutrality of election observers: these delegations are composed of members from all political camps. This is what makes the delegations politically balanced. Individual observers are never "neutral", but always bound by basic democratic values. The final report is the result of the individual observations – as was also the case this time.

Andrej Hunko, 18.04.2017