

While in many European countries, despite corona restrictions, we were able to experience impressive forms of commemoration of the 75th anniversary of liberation, the Day of Victory, we must currently note that right-wing tendencies continue to influence political life in Europe

We are concerned that some governments are using the opportunity of the pandemic to establish anti-democratic power structures, which threaten the very existence of democratic rights and freedoms even after the end of the Corona measures. The Hungarian government is being given emergency powers that will enable it to enforce its plans against democratically legitimized opposition, regional administrations and mayors. While the restrictions on anti-fascist commemorative events were enforced everywhere, justified by health risks, at the same time the municipal administration in Prague removed the Konev monument.

In all European countries, we see that the Corona measures have caused workers and employees to lose wages. Small businesses, especially in tourism, are suffering enormous losses, while cultural workers in all sectors are facing personal ruin. Help has already been announced for multinational companies. However, if Europe is not to suffer irreparable damage from this pandemic, we need a policy that recognizably serves the interests of the people of this continent and is not merely a redistribution to save large companies.

The discontent resulting from these problems is being used in various countries by right-wing populists and conspiracy theorists not only to protest against the medically sensible measures, but also to undermine the authority of governments. In Italy, Matteo Salvini and his Lega are trying to take advantage of the dissatisfaction of people in less affected regions. In Germany, anti-fascists are already warning of "conspiracy ideological mass gatherings". Here the AfD and other extreme right-wing groups - together with "concerned citizens" - are mobilizing to march against the Corona measures. During these actions, there was repeated violence by neo-Nazis and hooligans against police officers as in Chemnitz, Dortmund or Pirna.

In such developments, it is increasingly forgotten who are actually the biggest victims of the Corona pandemic in Europe, namely the refugees who are crammed together, for example on the Greek islands or in overcrowded transitional institutions. While all citizens are called upon to maintain a "distance", the refugees have to live under conditions where infection is almost

inevitable. At the same time, racist propaganda blames them for the spread of the corona virus.

Anti-fascism today proves itself by standing up against right-wing populist conspiracy theories and by helping the weakest of the victims of this Corona crisis. The FIR and its member federations stand up for international co-operation, which make together progress possible in the fight against the Corona virus, e.g. by the development of vaccines or medical assistance in particularly affected countries.

FIR Newsletter 2020-20