The Berlin Declaration of the 24th German Prevention Congress

German Prevention Congress and Congress Partners

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Since 2007, the German Congress on Crime Prevention and its event partners have published a „declaration" for each annual congress, based on the annual focus topic as well as current developments and trends in prevention work. The declarations are primarily addressed to those politically responsible for (crime) prevention in the municipalities, in the German federal states (Länder), in the German federal government and in Europe, as well as to academics and professionals. The present „Berlin Declaration" of the 24th German Prevention Congress follows in this tradition.

With the interplay of the fields of „Prevention & Democracy Promotion", the 24th Congress focuses on a set of topics that is as fundamental as it is comprehensive. In view of current developments in our society, it is necessary to deal with the relationship between the democratic social order and the prevention of extremism, of violent and other significant crime.

The present „Berlin Declaration" is based on the statements of five experts invited from various disciplines. In addition, the results of the „Heiligenberg Talks[1]„ have been included in the drafting, in which the participants discuss fundamental questions as well as concrete problems from different professional perspectives.

In the following, the overall considerations and findings are presented. Subsequently, the five expert opinions are briefly outlined in excerpts, occasionally supplemented by further aspects. Readers are therefore invited to form their own impression of the pros and cons of individual positions by studying the original texts that follow.

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[1] The „Heiligenberg Talks" are named after the place of residence of Dr. Wiebke Steffen, a longstanding expert member of the German Prevention Congress. The talks feature members of the Congress' advisory board as well as external experts.

This „Berlin Declaration" 2019 is supported by the German Prevention Congress and its event partners:

- the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ),
- the Professional Association for Social Work, Criminal Law and Criminal Policy (DBH),
- the Police Crime Prevention Programme of the Federal States and the Federal Government (ProPK),
- the Foundation German Forum for Crime Prevention (DFK)
- and the WEISSER RING e.V.

Part 1: Overarching Considerations and Findings

Challenges for democracy

Modern societies are characterised by great complexity and highly dynamic development. Technical, economic, and social advances have led to unprecedented opportunities in all areas of society. Modern democracies in particular have so far proved to be stable forms of society, which largely channel social conflicts into regulated formats, and which can reconcile their competing national interests among themselves by peaceful means of diplomacy and cooperation.

However, various developments raise doubts about lasting political stability. These include: the global economic and financial crisis; increasing environmental catastrophes with devastating, cross-border repercussions; large migration movements or the worldwide ascension of authoritarian regimes and anti-democratic tendencies within democratic societies. These strongly affect democratic systems. The internal challenges to democracy include in particular: increasing right-wing extremism and populism; recurring attacks and assaults by violent Islamists; riots by violent left-wing extremists and new movements that have so far been difficult to classify within existing political categories, such as the so-called „Gilets Jaunes" in France, which operate there with considerable readiness to use violence and with partly anti-pluralistic, conspiracy-driven and antisemitic attitudes.

These developments lead to democratic processes that were previously taken for granted, as well as institutions and social values, norms and rules losing their self-evidence. Freedom of the

press is under attack, democratic procedures are undermined, and political compromise is prevented.

In view of these challenges for modern democracies, it is urgently necessary to strengthen and stabilise democratic structures. It is imperative to reduce radicalisation tendencies, the spread of extremist attitudes and totalitarian ideologies, as well as the tolerance for exclusion and violence that often accompanies them.

In light of the 70th anniversary of the German Basic Law, the fundamental pillars of democratic Germany should be upheld as values and achievements to be defended. These are the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, democratic procedures, freedom of the press, freedom of opinion, freedom of belief and freedom of assembly, and the protection of the individual against arbitrariness and persecution.

In view of the 100th anniversary of the Weimar Constitution and the 30th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution, it is important to remember that a democratic society needs democratic commitment and committed democrats. The basic pillars of German democracy are by no means self-evident, but must be learned, lived, protected, and promoted.

A democratic society based on the rule of law guarantees its citizens a high degree of freedom and ensures pluralism of opinion, freedom of religion and the right to political engagement. At the same time, it must prevent radicalisation tendencies and the emergence of extremist ideologies, and constantly decide when opinions and actions become so problematic that they endanger democratic structures. Only then is intervention by security authorities necessary. This continuous balancing process marks the tension between democracy promotion and prevention.

Democracy Promotion

The promotion of democracy is not only a state task, but the common concern of a lively civil society.

Democracy depends on responsible citizens. They see themselves as social and political actors and represent their interests in the various institutions of representative democracy, parties, organisations, and initiatives. They discuss and reach compromises and

reconcile interests in democratic procedures. This can and should be supported by state programmes.

Democracy promotion is thus an umbrella term for the various fields of action

- in which even children and young people experience and learn democracy,
- that impart knowledge about democracy, its procedures, and institutions,
- that establish networks of democratic actors, projects, and institutions,
- that initiate political education and political action, and
- that build or strengthen opportunities for participation and reflective competences.

Its goals are the promotion of political maturity and the formation of discerning, reasonable and self-determined (political) subjects as well as the strengthening and further development of democratic structures, institutions, procedures, and communities.

Radicalisation Prevention

The prevention of radicalisation can also contribute to stabilising democracy. However, it follows a different logic. This form of prevention aims to prevent undesirable phenomena such as the embrace of violent actors or anti-democratic ideologies and organisations. It ranges from imparting knowledge about extremist organisations and their recruitment strategies, to education and reflection on corresponding ideologies, to (socio-)pedagogical individual case work with people who already show signs of radicalisation.

The prevention of radicalisation must be based on specific occasions and phenomena. It must also provide appropriate strategies and proposals for the different constellations and manifestations of problems.

In this respect, a diverse structure of actors is a condition for success in the prevention of radicalisation. Equally important here are, among others, the security authorities, schools, cultural, youth and social work, municipal prevention and the various programmes and projects of political education and radicalisation prevention.

They all need appropriate financial resources and thus the possibility to plan and act in the long term. This is because the challenges facing democratic societies are very likely to persist for a long time. This requires endurance.

Radicalisation Prevention and Democracy Promotion as a Societal Task

Modern societies are characterised by a high degree of complexity, a multitude of different actors, viewpoints, and interests. They are culturally, religiously, and politically diverse and are therefore faced with the challenge of developing and practising a civil, constructive approach to differing and sometimes opposing views.

Democracy promotion aims to support the responsible citizen in dealing with conflicts democratically and in negotiating social compromises. This always requires respectful interaction with one another. People must be able to live their diversity without fear. Not least in this and in dealing with minorities in general, the quality of democracies often becomes apparent.

In democratic Germany, the prevention of radicalisation is based on the Basic Law, human rights, and the separation of powers. Important objectives such as participation in and shaping of social processes or diversity and tolerance of lifestyles can be derived from basic democratic values. A stable democracy thus creates a suitable framework for preventive action and has a promoting effect on diverse developments in practice.

Germany has a diverse prevention landscape rooted in civil society, which in principle is well positioned for the complex challenges of modern societies. The important effort of counselling victims of extremist violence or hate crimes has also been expanded on in recent years.

At the same time, there is still the task of meeting new challenges by adapting existing approaches or developing new ones, increasing knowledge in the fields of action of democracy promotion and extremism prevention and, where necessary, promoting professionalisation.

Promoting democracy, preventing extremism, and shaping social diversity are equally important. The 24th German Prevention Congress would like to contribute to this.

Part 2: Expert Opinions

The following sections summarise the five expert statements on which the development of this „Berlin Declaration" was based. The supporter of the Berlin Declaration 2019 consider the following points of view, which are based on the formulations of the experts, as inspiration for further in-depth discussion in and between science, professional practice, and politics at the federal and state levels.

Görtemaker: Democracy Promotion in a Historical Context

The expert opinion by Prof. Dr. Manfred Görtemaker is titled „Demokratieentwicklung und Gefährdungen" (The Development of Democracy and Threats to it). It is devoted to the formation of democracy and human rights, the development of democracy in Germany as well as the risks and threats to democracy.

The fact that we live in a democracy in this country is taken for granted, especially by many people born here without any direct experience of authoritarian forms of state and society, for example, and who therefore do not reflect on it any further. The same applies to many other people who were born elsewhere in a democracy, experienced it there for a while and finally moved to Germany. Thus, the values associated with modern democracy as a form of government and political order appear to be unchallenged for the majority, at least in principle. The claim to universal validity of democratic principles also finds great consensus in this respect.

Seen historically, however, these current attitudes prove to be deceptive in their certitude.

On the one hand, the familiar habit of taking the given for granted risks failing to recognise that the preservation of this historically very young social order must be actively and constantly reaffirmed in speech and action.

Even in democracies that have been established for a comparatively long time and are generally accepted by most of society, both in Europe and, for example, in the United States of America, fault lines and symptoms of crisis have occurred from time to time. Even the oldest democracies experience pressure from parts of their populations. This is especially true for groups of people who

until then had seemingly been able to agree with the circumstances and developments without any problems, or at least to come to terms with their results.

For a long time, the dominant strata of society preferred models based on an authoritaria state. Bourgeois movements and commitments to a democratic form of government appeared several times since the middle of the 19th century but were unable to assert themselves (for long). Special mention should be made here of the „Weimar Republic" from 1918 to 1933, which was the first parliamentary democracy in Germany. Only the Basic Law of 23 May 1949 proved to be an essential cornerstone for an overall stable development of the second parliamentary democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The success of the Peaceful Revolution in the GDR in 1989 was followed by the legal solution of the „German question" through reunification on 3 October 1990. The development since then has been characterised not only by many positive aspects but also by fault lines which, among other things, have repeatedly raised doubts as to whether the rooting of democracy in the Federal Republic in the 70 years since 1949 was strong enough to allow the emergence of a democracy that was truly consolidated at its core out of its own lived tradition.

The consolidation of a lively democracy in Germany is an important matter. Fundamental to this are the rule of law in all public institutions and procedures, the prohibition of any private use of force (with exceptions such as in the case of self-defence against unlawful attacks) and, complementarily interwoven with this, the clear containment of the state's monopoly on the use of force.

The idea behind this distribution of tasks and their respective limitations, namely to protect citizens both from unlawful and possibly also criminal attacks by others and from abuses of power by the state or its organs themselves, contributes to ensuring orderly coexistence in society, the economy and the state. At the same time, the trust of citizens in public institutions is an essential prerequisite for the continuation of this form of state in peace and freedom. It is also essential for strengthening the connection between everyday democracy and positively directed prevention.

Welzer: Promoting Democracy from a Perspective of Social Psychology

The expert opinion by Prof. Dr. Harald Welzer is titled „Gesell-schaftspolitischer Essay mit Blick auf heutige Notwendigkeiten und Möglichkeiten der Demokratieförderung (Socio-political Essay Regarding Today's Necessities and Possibilities of Democracy Promotion)". It addresses in four major parts to the paradox of democracy, the threats to democracy, the civilisational project of democracy, and finally social inequality with a view to cultural, communicative, and political-pedagogical practice.

A democracy can only exist if the members of a society trust themselves and their society and take responsibility for it. Shared values and ideas, experienced as justice and participation, as practised equality of opportunity and solidarity, support the building of trust in society. Political responses are more likely to create new trust the more they explicitly name the most pressing problems and propose solutions in a concrete and comprehensible way.

Democracy can be seen as a kind of paradoxical form of society in that it can only ensure social cohesion if this cohesion already exists on this side of the constitution. In order to be able to productively negotiate the fundamental tension between individual and collective interests, a minimum degree of cohesion is required, not only in material terms, but above all in terms of perceived cohesion. However, it is precisely this essential *collective* communal experience that seems to be diminishing today in favour of *fragmented* sub-groups.

Democracy also presupposes the human image of an autonomous and self-determined individual. Conversely, however, every democratic society imposes a series of obligations and restrictions on its members. It follows from this paradox that, in principle, a democracy can never achieve a permanently static state, but can only ever stabilise itself dynamically. In this sense, a liberal democracy that guarantees freedom of opinion and action is always a challenge for people and is also felt by some to be an imposition in the face of certain events or developments.

Such aspects make it clear that democracy promotion requires a cultural practice that is no longer primarily oriented towards

economic prosperity. Priority should always be given to whether or not something already given or planned contributes to social cohesion.

Furthermore, it is central for democracy promotion to develop the culture of communication more in the direction of constructive and positive aspects. In addition to the system-stabilising effect, this would reduce the efficacy of the successful strategy of right-wing populism to permanently transgress verbal boundaries in order to then use the established media and politics as resonance amplifiers.

For the concrete work in political education, for human rights education and for practising democratic forms of communication, a change in the fundamental orientation of strategies is also possible.

Traditional strategies of historical-political education and the associated places of learning create both awareness and consternation through retrospective thematic concentration on and direct confrontation with macro-crimes (e.g. genocide, collective crimes against humanity, war atrocities, so-called ethnic cleansing).

In contrast, from a more recent socio-psychological perspective, in the course of the succession of generations and the associated change in the horizon of experience of each new generation, it is becoming increasingly important to replace traditional orientations in a future-oriented manner with civic learning spaces of a new type. Those, against the background of historical learning, which continues to be important, open up positive experiences with active involvement in local, regional and overarching social or even political events.

These places of learning aim to promote psychologically positive foundations for a consolidated identity and the conviction, based on this, that and how one can act righteously and prevent crimes both collectively and personally. Active appropriation processes and the development of independent interpretations and evaluations are much more sustainable for democratic consciousness than the adoption of prefabricated interpretations or conceptions.

Eckert et al: Democracy Promotion In the Context of Conflict-Theoretical Sociological Considerations

The expert opinion of Prof. em. Dr. Roland Eckert together with Dr. Coerw Krüger and Prof. Dr. Helmut Willems is entitled „Gesellschaftliche Konflikte und Felder der Prävention (Social Conflicts and Fields of Prevention)". It first addresses the connection between democracy, the rule of law and violence prevention. It then deals with putative changes in the social topography of Germany; conflict scenarios of the present; conflict, escalation and violence; three approaches to prevention; fields of prevention, and finally conflict management in European and global politics.

When the rule of law and democracy are successful, they mutually promote each other and jointly reduce the likelihood of violence. In sociological and political science approaches to the prevention of violence and extremism, the focus is therefore on peaceful conflict regulation through constitutional and democratic procedures. This takes place through attempts at institutional and participatory regulation of conflicts, e.g. through hearings, collective bargaining, arbitration and mediation procedures, parliamentary voting and adjudication according to existing laws. The objective there is to bring fundamental social, ecological, and ideological conflicts onto the „track" of regulated procedures and thus withdraw them from violent struggle. This establishes a system that is capable of learning, in which mutual criticism can be allowed, conflicts can be dealt with in legal procedures and political decisions can be made and enforced, but also revised.

Shifts in the social topography of Germany on the one hand, such as the differentiation of social milieus and the increasing risk of poverty, and new conflicts about the way forward on the other, such as the ecological crisis, the conflict over immigration or the crisis of the financial markets, can, in their accumulation, shake the acceptance of the rule of law and democracy.

Prevention measures that take into account individual biographies and attitudes as well as patterns of action are still necessary, but they alone cannot be expected to reverse the trends. Beyond behavioural prevention, it must therefore always be a matter of prevention focusing on circumstances.

Prevention and democracy promotion take place in a broad range of social fields.[2] Among these, some important structural problems can be identified. In the school system, for example, sensible projects that are limited in time often cannot be taken over into regular operation. Above all, it is important for the reinforcement of democratic orientations to enable the practice of empathetic perspective-taking as well as participation in conflict resolution processes and the experience of inter-group solidarity.

Diversity and differing perspectives are constitutive starting points for democratic decisions. Consensus is more likely to be reached if those involved in discussions and disputes recognise, at least in principle, that there are facts that are valid independent of the parties' interests. In this respect, it is one of the tasks of science to take an appropriate stand in public debates, and it is one of the tasks of an independent press to introduce the factual findings based on thorough research into the public discourse. Furthermore, the continuous availability of fact-checks and counter-information on the internet would be necessary.

The legitimacy of state order (also) depends on its efficiency and efficacy. Law enforcement is the basis of trust in the state. Adequate staffing of the administration, police and judiciary is therefore urgently needed.

Conversely, however, identifiable failures of the security authorities must also be dealt with, as for example in retrospect in the case of the NSU murder series, and continuously with regard to the issues of xenophobia and right-wing extremism in the ranks of the civil service. Following on from this, the various initiatives to promote intercultural competence within the police are also to be welcomed, in order to be able to professionally counter the aforementioned phenomena from the outset.

The continued existence of democratic institutions depends on the trust of the citizens. In this respect, transparency of parliamentary procedures will become increasingly important, not least to be able to effectively counter the current boom in conspiracy theories.

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[2] These include, among others, schools, (experiential) education, family support, residential quarters, mediation procedures, social work, vocational training, community work, street work, media education, journalism, justice, police, parliamentarianism.

Milbradt et al: Democracy Promotion and (Radicalisation) Prevention in Social Pedagogy

The expert opinion by Dr. Björn Milbradt, Katja Schau and Dr. Frank Greuel is titled „(Sozial)-pädagogische Praxis im Handlungs-feld Radikalisierungsprävention – Handlungslogik, Präventions-stufen und Ansätze ((Socio-)Educational Practice in the Field of Radicalisation Prevention – Logic of Action, Levels of Prevention and Approaches)". It focuses on the following three questions: What is prevention? What is (radicalisation) prevention? How is the field of (socio-)educational radicalisation prevention structu-red in Germany?

Even though practical social work shows many overlaps between political education, democracy promotion and (radicalisation) pre-vention, it seems necessary in this field of practice to be aware of the distinctions and boundaries.

Education is to be understood as a „learning process" that is about subject formation. This learning process is by no means identical with the short- or long-term acquisition of new knowledge con-tent and competences. In democratic states, political education in particular is directed towards the development of personal auto-nomy. Political education measures can certainly have preventive effects. However, they lack the preventive logic of action and the corresponding phenomena-related justification of the respective intervention. Preventive measures differ from open educational processes by their normative focus on wanting to avoid something specific – namely certain attitudes and actions and the underlying motivations, orientations, attitudes, and intentions.

Radicalisation prevention needs a clear concept of the aspects of radicalisation it addresses, which indicators it uses for these aspects and which (individual) causes these radicalisations may have.

The area of radicalisation-related universal prevention begins with the fact that approaches to raising political awareness are primar-ily oriented towards radicalisation and therefore follow a preven-tive logic of action. Selective prevention follows when specific risk factors are dealt with. Finally, we speak of indicated prevention when, for example, young people with first „contacts with the scene" or affinities are addressed and thus the target group is clearly specified.

Being situated in these different levels of prevention (universal, selective, and indicated) is thus directly linked to considerations of target groups and their externally constructed needs. However, the general (social) pedagogical approaches can usually only be identified in their preventive orientation in the concrete work with a prevention-relevant target group. Therefore, the prevention actors need to be able to make assumptions about risk and problems as well as protective factors explicit and to apply them methodically in their practical work.

The multitude of social, socio-spatial, biographical and psychological radicalisation factors necessitates a differentiated and complex prevention landscape. Only in this way is an appropriate response to the most diverse ideologies, situations, and problems even conceivable and an embedding of radicalisation prevention in the heterogeneous civil society guaranteed. In this respect, a prevention strategy can be considered adequate for the phenomenon if it includes a wide variety of actors and approaches, and if it also integrates civil society and school actors, as well as those from child and youth welfare, in addition to those from the security authorities. Prevention in this field is therefore not just a state task, but a task for society as a whole.

Beelmann: Prevention on the Basis of a Development-Oriented Model of Radicalisation

The expert opinion by Prof. Dr. Andreas Beelmann is entitled „Grundlagen eines entwicklungsorientierten Modells der Radikalisierung (Fundamentals of a Development-Oriented Model of Radicalisation)". It addresses the following topics in four major parts: Definition and definitional problems of radicalisation and extremism; theories of radicalisation and extremism; a development-oriented model of radicalisation and finally implications for the prevention of radicalisation.

Radicalisation and extremism do not arise spontaneously. Rather, they can be explained by developmental processes from which, in turn, corresponding prevention concepts can be derived. Political and religious extremism, as is developed in eight steps in the first part of the report, are not to be understood definitionally as a form of political opinion or action, but as the result of a problematic social development.

According to the development-oriented model, the first stage consists of developmental processes that are characterised by the interaction of different risk factors and protective factors. These factors lie in different areas (individual and social, general, and extremism-specific). A radicalisation process can start here if, in the longer term, a negative relationship develops between risk impact and protection.

The lack of satisfaction with democracy therefore proves to be an important risk factor for the formation of xenophobic attitudes, while approval of democracy, and specifically a positive attachment to political values such as the separation of powers, proves to be an important protective factor. As far as the further course is concerned, four processes can be named in the second stage that condition extremist attitudes and actions: Identity problems, prejudice structures, political or religious ideologies and dissociality. The more pronounced these are, the more likely it is that extremist attitudes and actions will develop, which represent the third stage of this development model.

On the one hand, prevention can be relatively unspecific in addressing individual risk factors and protective factors or a combination of several such factors, which can usually also have relevant influences on other developmental problems. On the other hand, it should also be aimed relatively specifically at the later radicalisation processes. Intervention research provides numerous indications in this regard, for example in the area of prejudice prevention or the prevention of dissocial behaviour problems. By contrast, research on the effectiveness of political education or the prevention of ideologies has been less extensive to date. Due to the long-term processes and the relatively small sample group, there is a great challenge here, which science will have to face offensively in the future.

Berlin, May 2019

Content

II. Lectures and Documents from the 14th Annual International Forum

III. Annex