

OPEN LETTER // 26.10.2018

No civil rights free zone in Eisenbahnstraße!

In disgust we had to take note that the Saxon government in collaboration with the city government of Leipzig will enact a so called "weapon free zone" in Eisenbahnstraße from 05.11.2018 on, ignoring the concerns of many civil and communal local actors. As part of a political campaign in preparation for the Saxon election campaign 2019 they continue a year long stigmatisation of the quarter by media and the police. The east of Leipzig being aim of the "weapon free zone" is one of the few urban areas in Saxony, where many different cultures and religions live together peacefully and respectfully. It will not solve the real problems of the quarter but will in fact sharpen them. **We deny the "weapon free zone" because of the following reasons:**

- (1) The weapon laws already in force forbid the carrying of ready-to-use weapons. To reach extended police intervention rights, in the future it will also be forbidden to carry any item that reduces the "defence skills of a person". What this means in reality is up to the police officers in duty. Thus the word "weapon free zone" is misleading.
- (2) By enhancing with this new edict the possibilities of controls without suspicion to a maximum, the basic civil rights of free traffic, integrity and privacy are levered out and the presumption of innocence is turned around. All inhabitants and guests of Eisenbahnstraße are degraded to second class citizens and criminalized generally. In addition it may be expected that through the huge definition leeway the profiling of police activities is offending the principal of equal treatment according to article 3 of the German constitution ("Grundgesetz"). We will not accept this!
- (3) The new "zone" will be marked with signs in the public space. Thus a specific urban area will be contained and stigmatized with negative psychological as well as economic effects. This devalues the year long efforts, that currently have an effect for a positive urban development. Especially for the socio cultural work of many non-profit organisations, but also for small business of gastronomy and resale along Eisenbahnstraße, the enacting of the "weapon free zone" is a punch in the face.
- (4) With the activities to follow there will be no objective progress in public security, against gang criminality, illegal betting and drug dealing, because for the controls the barracked riot police ("Bereitschaftspolizei") will be used which have neither local knowledge, closeness to citizens nor the necessary tact. We are convinced that with the "weapon free zone" the security situation in general will not be improved, but the symptoms will just be treated by punctual displacement.

We demand instead of the “weapon free zone” **an effective overall concept** that meets the population of the quarter with respect and that applies to the causes. This requires on the one hand a police that are not hiding in the police office or cruise the quarter in the patrol car as before, but are rooted in the quarter and cooperate trustfully with the citizens living here. On the other hand we need effective prevention offers: socio cultural offers, enhanced youth work, especially for endangered children and teenagers, and a drug aid that helps affected people instead of criminalizing them. Security only grows locally out of cooperation and mutual respect.

Signers of the open letter:

Ost-Passage Theater e.V.

Pöge-Haus e.V.

Fortuna, Kino der Jugend e.V.

Helden wider Willen e.V.

OFT „Tante Hedwig“

SchönerHausen GmbH

Reudnetz e.V.

Stadtteilladen Wasserschaden e.V.,

Kollektivhaus Wurze

Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, iaf.e.V.

Café Analog

Café MALA GmbH

Luise Reichel

Sophie Dohmen

Johanna Martens

Daniel Schade

Thomas Kornicz

Aaron Herr

Sarina Friederike Scheidle

Til Rob

Tizian Optenberg

Verena Zucker

Marlene Wald

Daniel Grunewald

Felix Almes

Maik Dankert

Marina Erler

Daniel Maier

Sophia Ollmer

Laura Mekky

Fard Gralal

Alex Fischer

Natalia Svalina

Tara Bonyad

Inger Witzenhausen

T. Bähringer

Marco Gene

Lennert Witzer

Alexandra Urbach

Maya Schellner

Max Günzel

Janek Zech

Jana Reinhardt

Michele Garitz

Stephan Mitsch

Valentin Endruß

Vanja Vrones

Michael Roßner

Kim Rösler ...