



PRESS RELEASE

Yanis Varoufakis banned from political activity: a dark weekend for democracy, human rights and freedom of expression in Germany

Berlin, 15 April 2024

Last weekend, from 12 to 14 April, Germany experienced a significant increase in authoritarian measures against Palestinian activists in Berlin. As a result, Yanis Varoufakis was banned from entering Germany and prohibited from any political activity in the country, including via digital platforms. The reason was [his speech at the Palestine Congress](#), which was censored.

"MERA25 Germany is standing in the upcoming European Elections on 9 June 2024. We therefore see the ban on Yanis Varoufakis, the leader of our sister party MeRA25 Greece, as an attempt to intimidate us in the upcoming election campaign and as a clear restriction of our democratic rights. We therefore condemn the unjustified ban on Yanis Varoufakis' activities in the strongest possible terms. This decision by the German Ministry of the Interior is yet another authoritarian censorship of peaceful activists who criticise the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the involvement of the German Government," said Johannes Fehr, MERA25 European Elections candidate.

The deployment of over 900 police officers to control the Palestine Congress in Berlin marks a worrying trend. The Congress was originally planned for 650 participants, with ultimately only 250, mainly Jewish and Palestinian activists, being allowed into the venue by the police. Police stormed the congress, cut off the power supply and banned it from continuing, causing widespread resentment and panic among participants.

"We are disgusted by the blatant disregard for the fundamental rights that this country claims to be proud of. The speculative justification that 'something anti-Semitic might be said' as a reason for pre-emptive censorship is a tactic of authoritarian regimes, not liberal democracies, and a clear violation of freedom of expression and assembly. It is a blatant disregard for the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law that Germany claims to represent. This dark weekend should alarm German society. We condemn the authoritarian development of the



German state and the unjustified repression of the political opposition," said Karin De Rigo, MERA25 lead candidate for the European Elections.

This Tuesday, 16 April, we will discuss the situation in [our regular livestream at 6pm CET](#) (5pm GMT, noon EST).

For interviews with Karin de Rigo and Johannes Fehr, please write to:

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Note to editors

Karin De Rigo



Karin De Rigo was born and raised in Italy, she studied languages and economics in Milan and lived in Switzerland before moving to Germany. She coordinates the MERA25 group in Berlin and was elected MERA25's lead candidate in Germany for the 2024 European elections in November 2023. As a candidate, she is committed to sustainability and global justice, in particular the realisation of a just peace in the Middle East



Johannes Fehr

Johannes Fehr joined DiEM25 soon after its inception in 2016 and has been working in the movement ever since, starting as a coordinator of the local group in Berlin organising events and protests. He now works as Organising Director for DiEM25 at the European level. He is a member of DiEM25's Coordinating Collective and vice-chairman of the board of DiEM25's political party in Germany: MERA25. With both organisations he works towards the transnational organisation that brings the change we so desperately need around the world: Just cities, regions and countries, run by its people. After growing up in the German countryside, he studied renewable energies before working as a consultant on renewable energies and energy efficiency in Berlin. His areas of interest include: transition towards a just and ecological future and building organisations that can make the necessary change happen. Johannes gathered his first activist experiences in the anti-nuclear movement in Germany before the 2008 financial crisis hit.

MERA25: A new party for radical change

For years, the number of people whose everyday lives are characterised by fears of decline and a bleak future has been on the rise. Wages are stagnating and many people are affected by exploitation and discrimination. At the same time, our planet continues to warm up and floods, droughts and forest fires are on the rise. The powerful in politics and business are jeopardising our livelihoods. Radically different policies are needed to change this. That's what we're doing - with MERA25. Our goals are:

Realistic - realisable, concrete and science-based.

Rebellious - We are not satisfied with the status quo and consistently stand up for the interests of the many.



Radical - We want real system change that gets to the root of the problems. Economically and socially.