



PRESS RELEASE

MERA25 condemns Germany's authoritarian turn: German government caught lying about ban on Yanis Varoufakis

Berlin, 18. April 2024

In the wake of the canceled Palestine Congress last weekend, the German Ministry of the Interior has grossly overstepped its authority by imposing an undemocratic ban on the Greek economist, politician and MERA25 Greece political party leader, Yanis Varoufakis. Furthermore, the German government issued a series of contradictory statements on the ban to deter and intimidate him from speaking at the Palestine Congress.

MERA25 denounces the Interior Ministry's efforts to sabotage the lawful and peaceful proceedings of Friday's Palestine Congress and Saturday's demonstration. MERA25 Germany was compelled to abruptly cancel a scheduled event in Hamburg where Yanis Varoufakis was set to appear as part of the party's European election campaign. This move from German state authorities is part of a broader pattern of inconsistent and non-transparent actions that underscore a disturbing abuse of power at the heart of German politics.

- **Saturday 13th of April:** Berlin police, under directives from the Interior Ministry, inform the supervising lawyers of the demonstration against the cancellation of the Palestine Congress about a "ban on political activity" imposed on Yanis Varoufakis including a travel ban.
- **Monday 15th of April:** During a press conference, the spokesperson for the Interior Ministry refuses to comment on "individual cases" when questioned by journalists on Yanis Varoufakis' travel ban. Separately, the federal German police sent an email denying any travel ban against Yanis Varoufakis.
- **Tuesday 16th of April:** The federal German police contradict their previous statement by confirming in an email that a travel ban was indeed imposed on Yanis Varoufakis from April 10 to April 14.
- **After the Cancellation:** Yanis Varoufakis learns about the bans only after the Palestine Congress is canceled, having not been informed by German authorities beforehand.



Word by word quotes from the federal German police correspondence with the legal representative of Yanis Varoufakis:

Monday 15th of April: *"The Federal Police has not issued a travel and residence ban against your client within the meaning of § 11 AufenthG."*

Tuesday, 16th of April: *"In the context of a possible participation as a speaker at the Palestine Congress 2024 in Berlin, your client was the subject of an alert for national refusal of entry pursuant to Section 30 (5) BPolG in conjunction with Section 6 (1) sentence 2 FreizügG/EU, limited to the period of the event from April 10 to 14, 2024."*

This series of events not only reflects a grave violation of the rights to freedom of movement and political expression, particularly concerning an EU citizen, but also illustrates a concerning trend of governmental opacity and authoritarian practices within Germany. The ministry's actions are a flagrant violation of EU laws and norms, which guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms to its citizens.

We condemn this repression in the strongest terms and demand full accountability from the German Ministry of the Interior. These actions not only undermine the democratic foundations of the European Union but also unfairly disrupt MERA25's campaign for the European elections. We call for an immediate and transparent investigation into this matter to ensure that such undemocratic overreaches do not occur in the future, and for all democratic citizens to not be deterred and join our fight for freedom of speech and justice for Palestine.

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