



Monday, 30th March 2015

## A Common Statement on the Evolution of the PEGIDA Movement throughout Europe

PEGIDA is the name of a movement originating in the city of Dresden in Saxony, Germany. On 20th October 2014, weekly demonstrations of the so-called “Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West” (German: “Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung Des Abendlandes”) started to rally against – as the organisers claimed – a failed immigration and asylum policy in Germany and the European Union, which the movement seeks to alter. It protests against what it considers the islamisation of the “Western world”, calling for more restrictive immigration rules, in particular for Muslims. The movement calls itself “Patriotic Europeans”, but their core values contradict with ours, for we as Young European Federalists appreciate diversity and protect minorities from the tyranny of the majority. PEGIDA abuses the label “Europe”, because they are not “Patriotic Europeans”, but trapped in nationalistic, often racist, mindsets. Yet, it is important to incorporate the PEGIDA movement into the political discourse and to keep the lines of communication open!

### European Expansion

Currently, the PEGIDA movement spreads out across Europe and is underway to evolve from a national, in particular German phenomenon, to a pan-European movement, inducing us to react. Its former leader mentioned in an interview that he believes “PEGIDA is a European matter” and that sections already exist or are being founded in **Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom**. In January and February, PEGIDA sympathisers in many of these countries gathered to participate in demonstrations, the most recent one in Newcastle upon Tyne. The movement has taken on a whole new dimension, stating clearly that it cannot be denied or neglected as an important issue in European civil societies.

### The Manifesto of PEGIDA: Undoing Equality

In February, PEGIDA published a manifesto with several claims directed towards the federal government of Germany which is presented below. Still, most European PEGIDA branches adopt the same claims, calling for us as Young European Federalists to take up a stance.

- 1) PEGIDA asks for a new immigration law to stop “unregulated, quantitative immigration”.

Instead of that, new rules for a “qualitative immigration” shall be established.

- ◆ **JEF:** Europe is one of the wealthiest regions in the world and thence triggering immigration. An immigration law defining the quality of an immigrant does not follow our comprehension of universal human rights and would stand in opposition to an open, tolerant and inclusive Europe.
- 2) PEGIDA wants to add a written passage to the constitution and fundamental laws which makes integration into the new civil society a right, but also a duty for every immigrant. This would eliminate the fear of a disappearing (native) culture and identity.
  - ◆ **JEF:** It is an essential requirement to hold the constitution and laws in respect. Simultaneously, it is mandatory for state authorities not to abdicate from their duty to provide equal rights to all citizens. In addition to that, immigrants just as native citizens should have the right to individual self-fulfilment to guarantee an open society.
- 3) PEGIDA wants to expel religious bigots and Islamic fundamentalists or respectively deny them entry or residence permits within the area of the Schengen Agreement.
  - ◆ **JEF:** PEGIDA supporters fear the islamisation of the “Western world” calling for more restrictive immigration rules in particular for Muslims, but this way they exclude, trivialise and stigmatise all members of this religion. JEF stands up for a tolerant Europe and condemns discrimination and restrictions of human rights on grounds of religion.
- 4) PEGIDA aims to bring about peaceful cooperation between European nations, instead of depriving national parliaments of their sovereignty and authority due to “mad control from Brussels”.
  - ◆ **JEF:** We believe that the creation of a democratic European federation is a crucial ingredient for peace as well as a more free, just and democratic society. National governments and parliaments are increasingly less able to guarantee these goals in a globalising and more interdependent world. Because of this, it is an important step forward to provide the European Parliament with the decision-making authority for this task.
- 5) PEGIDA wants to bolster internal security by increasing the financial resources for police forces and by stopping the reduction of police staff.
  - ◆ **JEF:** Instead of increasing the budget for national police staff, the focal point should be to bring about deeper cooperation between police departments of member states, sustainable financing for the protection of external European borders of the Schengen area and simultaneously the disappearance of internal, national frontiers.

### Misuse of the term “United States of Europe”

The PEGIDA movement tries to sharpen its political profile by using a concept of the “United States of Europe” as a future vision for Europe, even though it does not mean an advancement of European integration. PEGIDA technically speaks about a European federation in which every nation retains its distinct identity and culture, but in fact the movement is pursuing Charles de Gaulle's concept of a “Europe of nation states” (French: “L'Europe des patries”; German: “Europa der Vaterländer”). Something that is often referred to as a programme item of extreme political groups and organisations revealing indication of racism and anti-Semitism. Moreover, PEGIDA wants a Europe which lacks powerful supranational institutions and does not submit to “decrees from Brussels”.

We use the same label for our concept of a democratic European federation, but it diverges in substance and implies something fundamentally different! Hence, we accuse PEGIDA of false labelling and trivializing, as the movement implies a federation and closing of ranks, but effectively calls for more autonomy and independence of nation states. PEGIDA's model of a “United States of Europe” is a rival concept against the European Union, aiming at shifting

political power back to the intergovernmental level. We protest against this misleading concept and the misuse of the term “United States of Europe”!

## Speak up for an Open, Tolerant, Inclusive and Democratic Europe!

As Young European Federalists, we state that PEGIDA poses a threat concerning our political keynote goals for an open, tolerant, inclusive and democratic Europe. The common statement on the evolution of the PEGIDA movement throughout Europe was initiated by JEF Saxony and JEF Germany and is supported and signed by the following sections:

Junge Europäische Föderalisten Sachsen e.V. (JEF Saxony)  
Junge Europäische Föderalisten Deutschland e.V. (JEF Germany)  
Executive Board of the Young European Federalists Europe (EB of JEF Europe)  
Les Jeunes Européens - France (JEF France)  
Young European Movement United Kingdom (YEM United Kingdom)  
Gioventù Federalista Europea (JEF Italy)  
Genç Avrupalılar Derneği - The Association of Young Europeans (JEF Turkey)  
Mladi evropski federalisti - Crna Gora (JEF Montenegro)  
JEF Kosova - Federalistët e Rinjë European (JEF Kosovo)  
Mladi Evropski Federalisti - Kumanovo (JEF Macedonia)  
Förbundet Unga Européer (JEF Sweden)  
Młodzi Europejscy Federaliści (JEF Poland)  
AGAT - Young European Federalists of Azerbaijan (JEF Azerbaijan)