



Declaration nr.3

Name of the person introducing the motion: Christian Kollman

On behalf of the party: Süd-Tiroler Freiheit (STF)

Motion: No to reinterpretation of symbols of anti-democratic regimes!

In a number of today's states within the European Union there were periods in which anti-democratic regimes governed. The victims of such systems were the citizens as a whole and particularly ethnic minorities who were compelled to identify with the ethnic majority, i.e. the biggest ethnic group representing the 'nation' of the state. As a means of oppression of the minorities, various symbols of the respective anti-democratic regime were adopted. These symbols had to be very well visible, for instance in the state's architecture and language. In a series of states, after the victory of democracy, these symbols have been removed because they were considered not to be compliant with basic democratic understanding.

In some states, however, these symbols have been retained. This is the case in Italy, mainly in its autonomous province of Bozen (South Tyrol). To name but a few examples: In the centre of Bozen there is the so-called "Victory monument". This monument commemorates Italy's so-called victory over Austria after the First World War which led to the annexation of South Tyrol and oppression of the South Tyroleans. The monument is equipped with fasces and the Latin sentence "HIC PATRIAE FINES SISTE SIGNA / HINC CETEROS EXCOLVIMVS LINGVA LEGIBVS ARTIBVS" (Here at the border of the fatherland set down the banner. From this point on we educated the others with language, law and culture). Also in Bozen, on the façade of the finance building, the relief of the Duce Benito Mussolini is shown, and the Fascist slogan "CREDERE OBBEDIRE COMBATTERE" (believe obey fight) can be read. During the Italian Fascist period throughout the whole South Tyrol constructed and thus pseudo-Italian place names – such as "Alto Adige" for South Tyrol – were introduced in order to give the impression that the province has, since the Roman period, continuously been settled by Romans and their direct descendants, the Italians, respectively.

The European Free Alliance supports the STF condemnation of the governmental attempts to reinterpret symbols of anti-democratic regimes and calls the European Union to declare these symbols antidemocratic, a threat to peace and a breeding ground for anti-democratic and anti-minority ideologies.

In 2016, more than 70 years after the official end of Italian Fascism, the above-mentioned symbols stand there unchanged including thousands of pseudo-Italian place names. They all are defended both by politicians – no matter whether from the left, centre or right – and established historians. By these, in the recent years these symbols have been repeatedly been reinterpreted as peace-keeping operations, a de-fascistified and cultural enrichment and a source of identity in particular for the Italian population in South Tyrol. Other parts of the South Tyrolean population, however, still perceive these symbols as historical lies and an insult. Playing them down and reinterpreting them is perceived as mockery and to be in contrast with basic democratic values.

1. condemns any attempt to reinterpret symbols of anti-democratic regimes as means of peace and enrichment for who and whatever.
2. calls on the European Union to declare above-mentioned symbols antidemocratic, a threat to peace and a breeding ground for anti-democratic and anti-minority ideologies.

ENDS.