

# Fresach Charta

## On Resistance and Responsibility

The value and dignity of humankind in its freedom and equality are enshrined in numerous historical documents, yet they are repeatedly called into question and threatened by political motives and economic interests. The same applies to peace, security in all its forms, democracy, the nature and the environment.

### **So what now? What can be done?**

Human freedom culminates in responsibility for one's decisions and actions. And depending on the times and individual capabilities, this gives rise to the right and the duty to resist in order to reinstate the law, to restore the value and dignity of humankind and nature, and to eliminate the causes of their violation and affront.

Historical milestones of civil rights and freedoms – from international law to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations conventions, to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights – owe their existence to the achievements of great individuals. These personalities, guided by enlightenment and reason, stood up with a mature conscience against powers and rulers, against nonsense and madness, and resisted the unacceptable circumstances they encountered. They resisted out of a sense of responsibility.

### **Progress towards Peace**

It was their resistance to errors and to circumstances deemed reprehensible by reason and conscience that revealed the positive prospects of human freedom and dignity, of a democratic and republican state. And it was this resistance that contributed to political, humanitarian, technological, social, and ecological progress. And ultimately, to greater peace and freedom.

In secular republican democracies, this progress is enshrined in the constitution as the rule of law and the separation of powers. This progress is and remains the guiding principle of categorical imperatives and of a politics that serves humanity and is accountable. This politics, in turn, is inextricably linked to the freedom of science and expression.

## Combating illegitimate Tendencies

In recent years, certain very concrete and global developments in politics, economics, and technology have once again begun to evade rationality and scrutiny based on this positive and codified right, guided by the obligation to the common good. Moreover, they do not hesitate to restrict the freedom of others and manage their lives out of self-interest and self-serving motives.

Therefore, many popular trends and programs – such as artificial intelligence and populist-nationalist politics – must be approached with caution and criticism. Should they restrict human freedom and dignity, they must be met with appropriate resistance, at least with those means that effectively halt them and mitigate any potential negative consequences.

These restrictions can come from all sides and levels – from the mayor of a small town to companies of all sizes and sectors, all the way to national leaders or party apparatuses. Constructive resistance must be organized accordingly; it begins in the immediate neighborhood and extends all the way up to the European Union.

Well-understood resistance, born of responsibility, remains a difficult exercise, especially for those enlightened circles and groups that – like Denk.Raum.Fresach at the Tolerance Center – feel committed to a democratic and enlightened understanding of the world, to understanding and dialogue among people, in Europe and beyond.

The pursuit of freedom and responsibility leads us to continually confront this difficult task in order to preserve the value and dignity of life, at least where we are able to counter threats to it through our own efforts. Resistance and responsibility therefore also mean vehemently opposing intolerance and paternalism.

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