

Shoot down Waffenverbotszone – strengthen social security!

Instead of strengthening the collective feeling of security in the neighbourhood around the Eisenbahnstraße, the weapons prohibition zone (Waffenverbotszone= WVZ) has made people's everyday lives more difficult through inadvertent violation of fundamental rights and experiences of discrimination. In November the "evaluation phase" begins, in which the benefits of the WVZ are to be assessed.

We, an alliance of residents and local initiatives, are convinced that as an instrument of authoritarian security policy it must not be extended!

With the following 10 demands we want to express our criticism of the WVZ. We will oppose the right concept of security on which it is based with our proposals on social security, which is oriented towards the needs of all people living in the neighbourhood.

We call upon all those who support these demands to organize their own events and actions under the label #WVZabschießen!

1. Against the authoritarian turn to the Right in state and society!

The WVZ is the practical conversion of the with fears loaded narrative of a special „dangerousness“ of the Eisenbahnstraße. Again and again, "security problems" are linked with racist propaganda against refugees and migrants, while the social and economic backgrounds of crime are concealed. The creation of a "dangerousness" serves as a basis of legitimacy for the introduction and normalisation of stricter state surveillance measures, the dismantling of the rule of law and control practices contrary to fundamental rights.

2. Delete the unconstitutional legal basis of "dangerous places" from the police law!

The authority of the police to intervene in suspicion-independent controls in the WVZ is the legal classification of the area as a "dangerous place".¹ We consider this legal basis to be unconstitutional.² The classification is entirely in power of the police and is neither comprehensible nor open to legal challenge. Thus one is absolutely at the mercy of the police's power of definition. Furthermore, the search for illegalized migrants is made possible, which represents a free pass for racial profiling.

3. End the racist and classist controlling practice of the police!

With a "suspicion-independent control" the police uses certain patterns in order to be able to act "efficiently". It uses – consciously or unconsciously – stereotypes of "criminal people" to justify its control practice. The connection to appearance, skin colour, supposed origin or religion (racial profiling), as well as assumed poverty or drug consumption is inadmissible but common practice.

4. The illegal behaviour of the police must stop! Against any police violence!

It could also be observed that police(women) sometimes acted extremely violently during the checks, controlled outside the WVZ with a false reason and collectively refused to show their service cards as required. However, we will not give up our democratic rights as a minimum.

5. End the disproportionate violation of fundamental rights!

We consider the WVZ Regulation to be disproportionate and thus unconstitutional.

Even if there is a legitimate goal, the prevention of the much-cited "violent crime", a higher amount of controls and threats of punishment proves to be unsuitable. A deterrent effect for people who really carry a "dangerous object" in the territory with the intention of committing an infringement can only be assumed in a few cases and has not been empirically proven by the competent authority. The analysis of the results (<https://copwatchleipzig.home.blog/zwischenbilanz/>) has shown that the enormous effort made by the police to find "weapons" and "dangerous objects" has been unsuccessful in the overwhelming majority of cases (approx. 96%).³ Due to the wide range of fundamental rights violations, this means to be inappropriate.

6. No displacement of marginalized groups from the neighbourhood!

– Against the gentrification of the East of Leipzig!

After the quarter was discovered by investors as an attractive place, an increasing displacement of local precarious people can be observed. It is not only rising rents and the attack of many self-organized left-wing and cultural projects by terminating rental agreements that are contributing to this. Especially for those affected by racism and classism, the neighborhood around Eisenbahnstraße is becoming a place of omnipresent danger of police control and repressive consequences. Precarious people, undocumented

migrants, drug users and homeless people are thus pushed into other neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city or into less visible places where violence and discrimination they have to face remain potentially unseen.

7. Social structures need public places – for a city for all!

With its stigmatising effect, the WVZ ensures that people no longer come to social and cultural projects in the neighbourhood, either for fear of the alleged “criminals” or of the police. This applies above all to offers for children, young people and the elderly. The park “Rabet”, actually the place with the most active intercultural and intergenerational exchange, is now avoided by many stigmatised or insecure people due to intensive patrols and surveillance.

8. No perpetrators- victim-reversion: For the possibility of self-defence!

Sexual, homophobic, trans*phobic as well as racist or anti-Semitic attacks also happen on the Eisenbahnstraße. In most cases, the police cannot provide immediate support. Many affected people have also had experiences with calling the police, which they have perceived as hardly helpful, inappropriate to the respective situation and concern or even as additionally violent and discriminatory. The prohibition of pepper spray in the WVZ makes it impossible for many people threatened by violence to defend themselves. This increases their sense of insecurity tremendously, as they are turned from victims into perpetrators.

9. Social solutions for social problems!

The problems in the neighbourhood must be tackled in a socially diverse, long-term and sustainable way, so as not to remain merely concerned with combating phenomena and thus create consequential problems. Priority should be given to strengthening social, cultural and self-organized projects by providing them with planning security, space and capacities. Social solutions to problems such as poverty, addiction and homelessness form the basis for social security across all milieus, which is more capable of preventing crime fundamentally. We therefore call for more contact points, social housing, free places for homeless people and a drug consumption room in the East of Leipzig.

10. Overall concept of social security instead of police persecution!

The only thing that the WVZ experiment in Leipzig has clearly shown is that the authoritarian treatment of social problems does not improve the situation, but rather aggravates or represses it. In order to increase security in the neighbourhood, it does not help to expand the police presence further and further and to let the police systematically violate fundamental rights. We would like to initiate a dialogue on what the real needs in the neighbourhood of living persons are.

Instead of seeking solutions to social problems in prevention and criminal law and extending the powers of the police beyond the boundaries of the rule of law, it would be necessary to present an overall concept of “socio-economic security”. This should above all focus on the security of those affected by social exclusion and discriminatory violence. This also includes the fair distribution of property, an end to restrictive asylum policies and the dismantling of welfare state standards.

Our weapon is solidarity! – Shoot down WVZ, strengthen social security!

1 The new police law, which will enter into force at the beginning of 2020, allows suspicion-free controls directly in weapons prohibition zones. The construction of “dangerous places” in accordance with § 19 I S. 1 No. 2 SächsPolG (valid version until the end of 2019) will then no longer be necessary.

2 Thus also a legal appraisal of KOP: <https://kop-berlin.de/files/175>, <https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Waffenverbotszone-in-Leipzig-4548584.html?seite=all>

3 The majority of the finds were everyday objects which were punishable by the wide definition of “dangerous objects”.