

Democracy - a Statement

Democracy, literally: *Rule of the people*, is the most civil and successful political system on Earth. It makes and preserves peace; it helps protect freedoms and opportunities of self-development; it gives political equality to all citizens, and it motivates to try hard - fostering public goods and regulating public bads. Accordingly vital democracies belong to the group of welfare-states and are particularly attractive for migrants.

Indeed, democracy can only function well if some basic needs are fulfilled: The entire population including weak persons and minorities has to be regarded as the people. Hence human rights such as the rights to life and health, human dignity, the juridical equality of all citizens independently from gender, age, race, religion and world view, the freedoms of profession and mobility, the freedom of opinion have to be effectively valid. Since only under these preconditions a general accessible, fair formation of will is possible, and the welfare of the entire nation (not only the interests of certain groups, parties, layers, classes, ethnics or religious believers) can become the main line of political orientation.

All citizens must have the right to participate in politics, particularly the right of electing and voting out deputies respectively the government. A free election, indeed, is not enough. In a democracy, rather, it must be possible to vote out a government, based on independent, fair law. Whenever political rights of participation or general human rights are dismissed or not valid at all, no democracy does exist. That's why an election victory without valid human rights does not deserve the term *democratic*. In the contrary, totalitarian systems - just the counterpart to democracy - have often been legitimated by majorities (see for instance the Hitler, Stalin and Mao regimes and current theocratic regimes such as Iran or Saudi Arabia).

Democracy needs free communication, based on a spirit of fairness and inclusion. The rhetoric of friend or foe and degrading insults towards political competitors do not fit with this spirit.

Democracy needs responsible coordination, based on the monopoly of legitimated force, effective institutions, and a spirit of joined citizenship. The democratic principles and institutions have to be effectively protected against any attack and subverting. Substantial policies should come into existence, since by substantial records and welfare performances for the public democracy meets its promise of being a government for the people.

Single elements of democracy such as the binding of power, responsibility, and the try of effective coordination can be found in any human culture since the beginning of human life; in so far democracy constitutes a common heritage of humankind. Democracy constitutes an alternative prospect towards any kind of absolute power - be it based on violence, uneven birth, religion, ideology, economy, technical structures, or organizational patterns. This prospect should be discussed not only in democracies (for being aware of existing failures and deficits), but in all cultures and nations. Misunderstandings and violence can only be overcome based on respect for every human being and any culture.