

PRESS INFORMATION

Seyran Ateş and Ibn Rushd-Goethe mosque join the 'Respect each other' initiative

Berlin, 10 September 2017



Seyran Ateş, initiator and co-founder of the Ibn Rushd-Goethe mosque, and André Puchta, Director of Communications at the Friedrichstadt-Palast. | Photo: Pedro Becerra

Above the main entrance, on a flag in front of the theatre, on its letterhead and in its advertising materials, the Friedrichstadt-Palast promotes a culture of respect. The initiative has gained a great response from politics, sport and society. Its logo has been adopted by organisations such as the German Civil Service Federation (dbb berlin) in Berlin, outdoor advertiser Wall GmbH, and BQN Berlin e.V., the vocational qualification network for migrants. Now, with Seyran Ateş and the Ibn Rushd-Goethe mosque, additional valued supporters are coming on board.

Seyran Ateş is the initiator and co-founder of the liberal Ibn Rushd-Goethe mosque in Berlin-Moabit, which is open to all religions. LGBT worshippers are expressly welcome at the mosque, too. After receiving death threats, the lawyer and feminist of Kurdish-Turkish descent now receives round-the-clock police protection – and visited the Palast:

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'People from all over the world meet here, and not only on stage. Diversity, respect and love for one another are present in every corner of the theatre. I feel extremely privileged to have experienced the wonderful familiar and caring atmosphere that prevails behind the scenes. Many people in politics, business, art and culture could learn something from this theatre.' The 'Respect each other' initiative, she added, shows more than clearly, following an eventful history, what the Palast stands for today: democracy, freedom and diversity.

'Evil gains the upper hand not because it is stronger, but only ever because good sits idly by and does nothing to stop it,' notes theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt, who launched the initiative in August 2016. 'We need a culture of standing up for each other,' urges Bishop Dr. Markus Dröge, who supports the Palast initiative as does publicist Dr. Florian Langenscheidt: 'Respect each other breathes a spirit of freedom, openness and diversity that I wholeheartedly support.'

The Berlin branch of the German Civil Service Federation (dbb berlin) joined the Palast initiative too, and it uses the Respect colours together with the dbb logo. dbb berlin calls for respect to be shown to public service employees as well. It points out that the threshold for violence is becoming ever lower – even police officers, fire brigade personnel and emergency medical staff are not safe. 'The role of dbb berlin in this situation is to keep highlighting the problem and asserting our demands so that our colleagues are better protected in future. Joining the campaign led by the Palast – the most-visited theatre in the capital – represents a small step in this direction,' explains regional chairman Frank Becker.

Street furniture supplier and outdoor advertiser Wall GmbH, a cultural sponsor of the Palast over the past decade, advertises the initiative in the 25 busiest U-Bahn stations in Berlin.

'Respect each other' is supported by a choice of colours (Colours of Respect) that is inspired by the rainbow flag, yet is neutral with regard to any particular political, religious, social or sexual orientation. The Colours of Respect are an independent statement for all those committed to mutual respect. The design was produced pro bono by Hamburg-based artist Zhoi Hy.

The full statement can be read on the website www.palast.berlin/en/respect, where the meaning of the eight colours is also explained. Various versions of the Colours of Respect are available in the download area to download and share. Persons, institutions and businesses are welcome to use the Colours of Respect free of charge and 'rebrand' them for their organisation.

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