

**Videostatement
des Bundeskanzlers
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Olaf Scholz, MdB,**

**anlässlich des
Progressive Governance Summit
„Joining Forces“
am 13. Oktober 2022
in Berlin**

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Dear friends and fellow progressives!

Welcome to Berlin!

And a big “thank you” to the Progressive Center and all the Co-Hosts for bringing together so many progressives from all over Europe and the transatlantic community.

Why is this Progressive Governance Summit such an important and timely event?

Because we are experiencing a *Zeitenwende*, a drastic turning point, at which the supporters of liberal democracy need to come together more than ever to join forces.

Hence the fitting title of this conference!

Of course, joining forces and forging alliances with like-minded partners is always a good idea.

This is why here in Germany – almost exactly a year ago – three different political parties decided to come together to form a governing coalition: Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals.

“Fortschrittskoalition”, “progress coalition” – that is the name we gave our alliance back then.

And that also describes the task we set ourselves: to move our country forward – as a free, open and future-oriented society. With life chances, equal rights and opportunities for all.

February 24 – Russia’s ruthless attack on Ukraine – has rendered that task more difficult – but also much more urgent!

Of course, even before that date we had known for quite a while that authoritarians and right-wing populists were gathering steam.

Liberal democracy has been under attack for years, both from within and without.

But that attack reached a whole new level when Putin's Russia invaded Ukraine.

First and foremost, it is the brave men and women of Ukraine who are bearing the brunt.

They are the people who are being killed and maimed, raped and deported.

That is why Germany, together with all our friends and partners, categorically supports Ukraine – financially, economically, in terms of humanitarian assistance, and also with weapons, including heavy artillery, modern air defence systems and flak tanks.

And make no mistake: we will continue our support for as long as it takes – for as long as that support is needed to fend off Russia's abhorrent aggression.

All along, Vladimir Putin and his enablers have made one thing very clear: this war is not only about Ukraine.

They consider their war against Ukraine to be part of a larger crusade:

- a crusade against liberal democracy,
- a crusade against the rules-based international order,
- a crusade against freedom and progress,
- a crusade against our way of life,
- and a crusade against what Putin calls "the collective West". He means all of us.

That is why Ukraine must prevail in order for liberal democracy and peace to prevail!

That is why, for all of us, this is definitely not a time to indulge in what Sigmund Freud once called "the narcissism of small differences".

In the case of Germany: Yes, certainly, Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals are different parties – or else there would not be three of them.

But our differences are truly insignificant when measured against the democratic, liberal and progressive values that we hold in common.

And it is these values and these principles that matter now!

That is why I wholeheartedly agree with Anne Applebaum's rousing wake-up call in her book "Twilight of Democracy" – and I quote:

"Because all authoritarianisms divide, polarize, and separate people into warring camps, the fight against them requires new coalitions.

Together we can fight back against lies and liars; together we can rethink what democracy should look like in a digital age."

Only together, I would like to add!

This is key!

This is what matters now!

If we agree on this one fundamental understanding, we may disagree on the details and on tactics.

As, indeed, we sometimes do even among allies or in our German "progress coalition".

And as you may do when discussing the way forward at this Progressive Governance Summit.

I am absolutely certain that as long as we are united on our fundamentals, these kinds of debates only make us stronger – stronger together.

Thank you very much!