



## Cosmopolitan and inclusive TU Braunschweig

### Speech by President Angela Ittel in memory of the victims of National Socialism at TU Braunschweig

27.01.2023

Dear members and members of TU Braunschweig,  
ladies and gentlemen,  
dear members of the AStA board,  
dear members of the anti-fascism and anti-racism department of the AStA,

I am very pleased to have accepted your invitation, dear student representatives, to commemorate this year's nationwide Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism at TU Braunschweig. Through the wreath-laying ceremony on January 27 in front of our historical building's staircase, we maintain the culture of remembrance for individuals who were discriminated against and persecuted due to their origin, religion, or gender. We also commemorate over 50 members of our university who were expelled, dismissed, or murdered by the National Socialists.

Today, after so many years after the end of World War II, we live in a democratic society. One of the most important principles of our Constitution is: human dignity is inviolable. Human rights and individual freedoms form the basis of our social order. And yet, unfortunately, we must note that discrimination and defamation of people based on their origin or other characteristics still take place in our society.

Above all, today I would like to make us all aware of discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation or gender. They were already one of the most persecuted minorities during the time of National Socialism. With the tightening of the criminal code in 1935, massive persecution of homosexuals was initiated. In 1936, the "Reich Center for Combating Homosexuality and Abortion" was set up. According to the Federal Agency for Civic Education, around 90,000 men were recorded by the Gestapo and 50,000 men were sentenced to prison sentences because of their homosexuality. People were persecuted, degraded and physically abused. Around 60% of homosexual prisoners died through mistreatment such as medical experiments.

Discrimination and persecution, whether based on sexual orientation or for any other reason, have a place at our university and in our society. As long as not all people feel understood and accepted, we have to address these issues. I welcome the decision of the German Bundestag to make the issue of persecution of homosexuals in the times of National Socialism the focus of this year's commemorative events in parliament.

As a university, we are a cosmopolitan and inclusive place for all people, regardless of sexual orientation and gender. Promoting diversity and equal opportunities are central cross-sectional issues in our university's development strategy. Since last year, we have been celebrating the diversity of our university members at the annual Diversity Day. The focus topic in our public relations work in 2023 is "queer-friendly TU Braunschweig". We want to give people from the LGBTQ+ community a voice and express our support.

I am firmly convinced that we as a university and as a society decide together how we want to treat each other and live. Universities have the task of standing up against intolerance, defamation and exclusion of minorities and living democracy. I would like to encourage all TU members to work together to create a cosmopolitan and inclusive TU Braunschweig across all areas of our university.