

# 30 Stunden Flagge zeigen

Accompanying the increasingly heated political climate, there are growing debates across Germany about the flags raised in front of public buildings. Parliaments, cultural institutions and universities display national flags to express the solidarity of the respective institution with parties in military conflicts, golden flags to stand up for social cohesion as ‘the many’, or pride flags to commit to a diverse society and the participation of marginalised groups. The latter seem to be particularly frowned upon in conservative and far-right circles. The arguments brought forward vary: sometimes legal arguments are cited, sometimes the relevance of public institutions to embrace diversity is questioned, and sometimes diverse lifestyles are rejected. The hoisting of pride flags is predominantly commented on by politicians, objections are announced by legal means, or the flags are torn down, damaged and, as recently in Neubrandenburg, replaced by national socialist symbols.<sup>1</sup>

There has also been an incident at TU Braunschweig. On the night of 5 August 2023, the weekend before Christopher Street Day—a day on which the resistance of queer communities against discrimination, persecution and repression has been commemorated since the 1970s—the pride flag was stolen from the flagpole on University Square and destroyed. The Presidential Office and the Senate of TU Braunschweig continue to stand by the flag, which, according to President Angela Ittel, stands for more than just “sexual diversity, but for greater added value of diversity in science in general and the diversity of scientific schools of thought”.<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason, that a rainbow flag can still be seen on University Square. For the annual *Diversity Days*, the rainbow flag is replaced by the *Progress pride flag*, which was designed by Valentino Vecchiotti in 2021.

Nevertheless, the current debates and actions give rise to many thoughts: What flags are hoisted beyond memorial days and national holidays, when the display of flags in front of public institutions is regulated by European, national and state flags? What lies behind the custom of hanging fabric in front of public buildings? Who is included by the display of which symbols and who is excluded? What deeper issues about societal ideas are being carried out when these pieces of fabric trigger reactions such as those described above? What ideals of society are expressed through these prominent signs? Are there other ideals or symbols that should be expressed

in their place or alongside them? What does the act of hoisting a flag say about forms of governance when institutional interests, views, and ideologies meet individual, possibly divergent interests? Who identifies with the flags, be it the European, the black-red-gold, the Lower Saxony, the TU Braunschweig, or a pride flag, and who does not?

In the context of discussions about the right to the city for all, this Stegreif asks you to design a flag that represents what you consider to be a matter of concern. What would a flag look like that could be flown in front of public buildings such as the university instead of or alongside other motifs? The design can be dedicated to a specific demand or be an expression of a speculative society.

Use the following publications and artworks as starting points for your exploration of the political dimensions of flags:

- Joshua Citarella, *e-deologies V*, 2023: “E-deology is an internet slang term used to describe complex ideological labels. These hyper-specific categories serve as a gamified form of identity play and niche personal branding in the chaotic landscape of online politics.” <https://joshuacitarella.substack.com/p/e-deologies-v-2023>.
- Jonas von Lenthe, ed., *Rejected: Designs for the European Flag* (Berlin: Wirklichkeit Books, 2020): “Today, the flag with the twelve yellow stars on a blue background is the unmistakable symbol of Europe. [...] The yellow circle of stars was chosen over more than 150 flag ideas sent to the Council of Europe by various private individuals. These colourful designs are published for the first time in *Rejected*.” <https://wirklichkeitbooks.com/rejected-designs-for-the-european-flag>.
- Metahaven, Marina Vishmidt, eds., *Uncorporate Identity* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010): “Uncorporate Identity is about emblems, networks, conflicts, social relations, fantasy, fiction, spies, comics, political theory, geography, voids, memory, history, monuments, search engines, globalization, the East, public diplomacy, black metal, unrecognized states, princes, princesses, solar panels, brands, speculation, flexible labor, crisis, cities, democracy, the Emirates, iconoclasm, heraldry, stealth, banlieues, hackers, money, the West, borders, poems, communism, libertarianism, shadows, research, architecture, and design (in no particular order).” <https://www.are.na/block/2624661>.

- The debate about the redesign of the flag of Australia: "Removing the Union Jack from the Australian Flag is long overdue and should've been done over 60 years ago like Canada. While it's ok to recognise the role the monarchy played in developing Australia into the modern country it is today, there are a number of reasons why we should ditch the Union Jack from our flag [...]." [https://www.reddit.com/r/vexillology/comments/14d6qqs/new\\_australian\\_flag\\_proposals/](https://www.reddit.com/r/vexillology/comments/14d6qqs/new_australian_flag_proposals/).

- 1 Eike Moldenhauer and Lisa Gutzat, "Hakenkreuz statt Regenbogenflagge: Entsetzen in Neubrandenburg", *Nordkurier*, 13. August 2024, <https://www.nordkurier.de/regional/neubrandenburg/ns-symbol-statt-regenbogenflagge-entsetzen-in-neubrandenburg-2795424>.
- 2 Joschka Büchs, "Regenbogenflagge: Präsidentin der TU Braunschweig äußert sich", *Braunschweiger Zeitung*, 9. August 2023, Interview, <https://www.braunschweiger-zeitung.de/braunschweig/article239151349/Regenbogenflagge-Warum-ist-Diversitaet-wichtig-Frau-Praesidentin.html>.

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## REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Design the flag: look at the references and think about what you would like to see displayed as a flag in front of public buildings. Which symbols, geometric shapes and colours are suitable for expressing the cause? Would you like to refer to existing motifs and codes? Should individuals, groups, communities, materials, more-than-human actors be represented by the motifs? Which narratives and/or themes are decipherable for which viewers?
- 2 Make a 1:1 model of the flag.
- 3 Explain the design: Choose a title for your flag and write an explanation of 300 words. This must make comprehensible what the concern is that is to be expressed with the flag and what the social relevance of this concern is. On the other hand, the explanation should make it clear why the flag is designed, how it is designed and what the individual components/colours/symbols mean.
- 4 Hand in the flag, including the flag holder and pole, as well as the explanation to the institute.

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## TO BE CONSIDERED

Use the full time of the Stegreif. The submission should present the content of your assignment in a way that is comprehensible to others.

- Research critically and open minded.
- Flag: The materials you use are up to you. However, take the behaviour in weather and wind into account in your considerations. Sew/

embroider/use found materials that are no longer needed. The format of the flag is freely selectable, but should correspond approximately to the conventional dimensions (0.5–1.0 m<sup>2</sup>). Discriminatory or derogatory symbols are not tolerated.

- Explanation: Use an A4 for the explanation and make sure that the title, the explanation and your name are clearly legible.

The submissions should be collected and published on the Institute's website as a small print-on-demand brochure. If you do not agree to this, please make a note of this with your submission.

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## DATES

- 24.10., 15:00, handout of the assignment on the website of GTAS, <https://www.gtas-braunschweig.de/ongoing/>.
- 28.10., 09:00–12:00, submission of the assignment in person at GTAS.