



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

“WE ARE EUROPE”: Demonstrations in 14 cities on Saturday, 21 February signal momentum as new pro European movement mobilises across borders for a strong Europe

Berlin, 22 February 2026. In light of Russia’s ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the rise of anti European forces within the EU, and growing geopolitical tensions, the young initiators Laura Wessbecher and Lina Abraham launched the cross party movement “We Are Europe.” On 21 February, demonstrations and actions took place in a total of **14 cities: Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart, Ansbach, Barcelona, Madrid, Turin, Rome, Milan, Brussels, Budapest, Warsaw and Vienna. Europe as the last major stable democracy.**

Around **350 people** took part in the rallies across Europe, including **130 participants** at the opening demonstration at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Within just a few weeks, the movement reached **500,000** people through its platforms.

“We Are Europe” is supported by numerous pro European organisations, including Pulse of Europe and JEF Young European Federalists, as well as representatives from Volt, SPD, CDU, FDP and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Further civil society actors also participated in the demonstrations.

The Berlin opening rally centred on speeches by the two co initiators **Laura Wessbecher** and **Lina Abraham**. Early speakers also included Damian Boeselager MEP, Volt, and Matthias Ecke MEP, SPD.

Additional speakers in Berlin were Katharina Linnepe (Comedian and Author), Melina Fries CDU (former JU state executive Thuringia), Moritz Heuberger (Member of the Bundestag, Greens), Maren Jasper Winter (Chair FDP Berlin-Mitte), Seyran Bostanci (Managing Director Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe), and Baro Gabbert (Greenpeace).

Key messages from the initiators

In her speech, **Lina Abraham** stated: “If the past weeks and months have shown us one thing, it is that **Europe is not a given**. I never thought that right wing nationalism, racism, isolationism and sexism would become so normalised again. **Free societies do not sustain themselves**. What is happening in the United States can also happen here, and we must not stand by. We are not here to romanticise Europe, but Europe is built on a dream, and we must not give up that dream, not now, when Europe is under threat from within and from without. We demand that Europe defends itself, that tech corporations are subject to democratic rules, and that equality and human rights are truly guaranteed. We are not weak, **we are the majority of this society**. When we stand together, power must listen. When we demand change, **politics must respond**. We must seize this opportunity now. Because we are Europe.”

Laura Wessbecher emphasised: “Our world has changed dramatically. The United States under Donald Trump threatens Europe with tariffs and questions our alliances. Russia has been waging a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine for four years. China is systematically expanding its geopolitical influence. Autocrats are gaining strength while democracies are becoming more fragile. **Yet Europe, with 450 million people, remains the largest democratic space on earth**. Europe is not perfect, but it is what we must defend, for us, for our future, for the world. Especially now, Europe must not be a distant project in Brussels. It **must become a project of its citizens**. When Trump threatened to annex Greenland and put pressure on European states through tariffs, it became clear to me: if Europe is to have a future, we as democrats must stand up. **We must act now, in the streets and within the institutions.**”

Together, **Wessbecher and Abraham** formulated the following core demands:

“We call for an **open and free Europe that protects Schengen, fundamental rights and social cohesion against isolation, fear and polarisation**. Europe **must finally become more capable of acting**, with majority voting instead of blockages, clear competences and strong democratic oversight through a strengthened European Parliament. For us, security does not only mean defence, but also the protection of the rule of law, the fight against disinformation and resistance to economic coercion. A strong Europe combines economic strength with climate protection, social fairness and technological sovereignty. At the same



time, Europe must move closer to its citizens, with genuine participation, strong regions and an open democratic reform process. **Europe is not a distant project. Europe is us.**”

Impressions from the demonstrations

Wessbecher described a strong sense of momentum: “Despite the cold, people came out in Berlin and across European cities. They organised demonstrations and actions and defied all circumstances. Some rallies were registered only two or three days before 21 February. **There was immense organisation, planning and coordination. We worked day and night. But one thing is clear:** the dedication and motivation of volunteers show that **the desire to stand up for Europe and finally take action is real. People want to raise their voices.** The 21st was truly a **European moment.** It is indescribable to know that at the same time, people in 14 cities gathered in the streets, at their universities and later at after parties in cafés. We are proud and convinced that the **moment for a European movement is now. The real work begins:** coordinating cities, building structures and bringing together requests from across Europe. In Berlin alone, around 20 people asked after the demonstration how they could get involved.”

Abraham added: “In Berlin, people stood in the cold for hours. **EU flags were distributed without our initiative.** Many participants approached us afterwards to thank us and offer their support. **The atmosphere was euphoric and energising.** Every speech was met with loud applause and embraces. With the DJ from Hadron Sounds, who composed music and songs specifically for the movement, the demonstration also became a **cultural moment.** We received **consistently positive feedback from the other cities.** Everywhere, Europeans connected, gained new energy and **felt part of something larger.** In every city, the **pro European spirit** was tangible.”

Petition to Europe’s Heads of State and Government

Parallel to the demonstrations, “We Are Europe” launched a petition outlining its core demands on the platform INNIT [link to petition](#). ([Link to the petition](#)). Within just two days, **2,300 signatures** were collected. The petition addresses not only European civil society, but directly Europe’s heads of state and government. The aim is to build political pressure and demand concrete reform steps.



Digital reach and international networking

Milan Hahn and Frederik Hegeler, who together with Lina Abraham and Laura Wessbecher form the Head Social Media Team, reported: “In the first two weeks, we achieved more than **500,000 views** across all accounts. Within the first 24 hours, people from across Europe reached out to plan assemblies in their cities.”

This demonstrates how quickly especially Gen Z connects digitally. Milan Hahn, who organised the protest in Budapest, added: “Through the protest in Budapest, we showed that there are also people in Hungary who, despite political pressure, courageously stand up in public for their values.”

The initiators announced that they will continue to expand the movement, with the goal of organising a large pan European day of action in May. “We Are Europe” explicitly sees itself as a cross party platform that brings together democratic forces and actively shapes Europe’s future.

Further information on “We Are Europe,” our core demands, a one pager and image material can be found in the attachment.

We kindly ask you to always mention both initiators equally.

For press inquiries and interviews, both initiators are available at any time:

Press contact:

Laura Wessbecher and Lina Abraham

E-Mail: laura.wessbecher@web.de and lina.abraham@web.de

Phone: 0049 16097507518 und 0049 17698740177

Instagram: [weareeurope.de](https://www.instagram.com/weareeurope.de), [weareeurope.eu](https://www.instagram.com/weareeurope.eu), [laura.wessbecher](https://www.instagram.com/laura.wessbecher), [li.na.ab](https://www.instagram.com/li.na.ab)

Kind regards

Laura Wessbecher and Lina Abraham

Portrait of the initiators

Laura Wessbecher (26) and Lina Abraham (26) are the founders of the cross party movement “We Are Europe.” As representatives of Generation Z, they share a

commitment to a strong and democratic Europe and both work professionally in the European Parliament.

Lina Abraham studied Political Science and Conflict Studies and currently works in the European Parliament for the Volt delegation. Laura Wessbecher is in the final year of her Franco German Master's programme in Political Science and works in the European Parliament for the SPD delegation.

The two met digitally, connected through their shared engagement in European politics.

Laura Wessbecher is originally from Ludwigsburg in Baden Württemberg, Lina Abraham from Darmstadt in Hesse. As young Europeans of Gen Z, they represent a generation that does not take Europe for granted, but seeks to actively shape and defend it.

ABOUT WE ARE EUROPE

WE ARE EUROPE is a cross party movement for a strong, independent and democratic Europe. Initiated by Laura Wessbecher and Lina Abraham, the initiative brings together people, organisations and companies who seek to defend Europe's democratic values in an increasingly authoritarian world

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