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Alms instead of participation

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Dr. Hontschiks Diagnose



of Bernd Hontschik

shut down

Germany ignores international treaties. The guiding principle of the policy for people with disabilities remains the principle of inequality and alms.

It's been a year. Back then, nobody spoke of a virus. It was cold, it had snowed. Actually, it wasn't the weather to go out of the house in a wheelchair. But we had reserved theater tickets and had been looking forward to this evening for a long time. The taxi arrived on time and the drive into town was smooth, despite the snow and slippery conditions. Because of the bad weather, the taxi driver drove in front of the playhouse on tram rails up to the forecourt, although this is prohibited for cars.

Some police cars with flashing lights were parked there that evening because a Kurdish demonstration was expected, but the taxi driver simply drove past them. He wanted to make it easy for my wife. There is no access to the theater, and the normal taxi stop is life-threatening: You get out and stand halfway on the road, and now you have to get into a wheelchair and drive around the taxi – pure horror. The taxi driver seemed to know this and drove boldly right in front of the

entrance to the theater. You could get out of the car and manage the transfer to the wheelchair in peace.

When my wife was finally in the wheelchair, all we had to do was endure the hideous elevator with its unsettling groans and creaking. Then we came to one of the few seats reserved for wheelchair users, in the last row, on the side.



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In a good mood after enjoying great art, we left the theater an hour and a half later. Unfortunately, this time the taxi driver didn't want to go to the forecourt. He is making himself liable to prosecution. Which of course he was right about. So I pushed the wheelchair through slush and over ice surfaces into the left lane of the four-lane road to the front passenger door of the taxi. The traffic roared past us very closely, while the transfer turned into a shaky business full of stress and hectic as we helped into the car seat on the icy ground. I slipped and trapped my wife's foot. When she finally sat in the taxi and the wheelchair was stowed in the trunk, our joy about the beautiful evening at the theater was almost gone.

A very small example, one of many. So much is wrong. In February 2009 Germany acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Germany thus committed itself to respecting human dignity, autonomy, independence and the diversity of people with disabilities, and to their full participation in society. But as recently as 2017, the obligation originally contained in a first draft law to build barrier-free areas such as restaurants, medical practices, pharmacies or cinemas was deleted from the federal government's draft law shortly before it was passed. This time it was not yet feasible to burden private investors so heavily, said the minister responsible at the time, Andrea Nahles, before the Bundestag. All that remained was the obligation to ensure barrier-free access to new buildings for state institutions. Andrea Nahles was not ashamed. The next time it would be so far, she said. The next time? In ten years? In twenty years? But one is disabled now and becomes one now.

The guiding principle of the policy for people with disabilities in our country remains the principle of inequality and alms.

Dr. med. Bernd Hontschik is a surgeon and publicist: www.medizinHuman.de

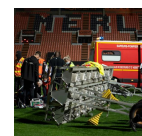
Currently in the book trade: Claudia and Bernd Hontschik: "No place. Nowhere." Westend Verlag 2020, 16 euros.

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