'March for Science' as the Way Forward?

Fred Felix Zaumseil
Bern, 8 December 2017
Time for Activism!

March for Science Berlin
22. April 2017, 13:00h
Start: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Unter den Linden 6

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The WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Photo: David Ausserhofer
MARCH FOR SCIENCE

EARTH DAY

22. April 2017, 13:00

Start: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Unter den Linden 6

#sciencemarchBER is for everyone, scientists and supporters, to show there is NO alternative to facts.
marchforscienceberlin.de
Women’s March, Washington D.C.

Photo: Vlad Tchompalov/Unsplash
Should we campaign for science and facts? If so, how?
March for Science Berlin

“...aims to raise awareness of the significance of scientific findings and verifiable results for our society. Science and research are pillars of freedom and prosperity. We are non-partisan and trans-institutional. We want science to be understood as a common good that supports politics and society in reaching evidence-based decisions for the public benefit. (...) Scientific knowledge on interdependencies in nature and society is incorporated into school and vocational education, this ever-increasing knowledge contributes to the sustainable future of mankind. (...) Science relies on the free exchange of ideas across international borders in order to tackle the big questions of our society.”
March for Science Berlin

- Neutrality?
March for Science Berlin

- Neutrality?
- Misuse?
March for Science Berlin

- Neutrality?
- Misuse?
- Elitism?
March for Science Berlin

- Low support at the beginning
March for Science Berlin

- Low support at the beginning
-Prosecuted researchers and threatened academic institutions
A Reality Check

Photo: Fred Zaumseil
March for Science Berlin

Photo: Fred Zaumseil
Marching for Science and Protecting CEU

Photo: Fred Zaumseil
• Standing up for scientific knowledge is not wrong, it is a good thing!
Standing up for scientific knowledge is not wrong, it is a good thing!

But:

March for Science did not strengthen the protection of academic freedom overall
• Standing up for scientific knowledge is not wrong, it is a good thing!

But:
• March for Science did not strengthen the protection of academic freedom overall

• Did nothing to address tension between expertise and democracy
A Way Forward

- Rule of experts? No!
A Way Forward

- Rule of experts? No!
- It’s politics, stupid!
A Way Forward

- Take democratic action against “classic” violations of academic freedom
A Way Forward

• Take democratic action against “classic“ violations of academic freedom

• “New academic activism“
Thank you!

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Photo: Fred Zaumseil