

# The Demagog Press-Coup

## About a journalistic Austrian putsch from Germany

#Austria #Strache #Kurz #Media #Wirecard

Demagogy is generally known as a way of mostly political seduction and misdirection of people. The German author **Martin Morlock** once defined the term with the following words: "Demagoguery is practiced by anyone who, when the opportunity arises, publicly advertises a political goal by flattering the masses, appealing to their feelings, instincts and prejudices, who is also guilty of agitation and lies, who shows truth in an exaggerated or grossly simplified manner, identifies the cause he wants to enforce as the cause of anyone with well-meaning, and displays the way in which he proposes his views as the only possible one."

Few people know that a long time ago the term was viewed positively as someone who was a gifted speaker. In this formerly positive sense, two famous German press organs set out in May of 2019 to revamp the rather lousy meaning of the term demagoguery, negatively anchored in the European and worldwide population.

The well-known Sueddeutsche Zeitung from Munich and the infamous weekly magazine **Der Spiegel from Berlin** were the first to report practically at the same time in May 2019 about an irritating video that was shot on the holiday island of Ibiza, Spain. Then Austrian Vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache and his partner and confidante Johann Gudenus were sitting next to a Latvian woman who claimed to be the niece of a Russian oligarch, allegedly chatting at least under plenty of vodka Red Bull influence informally about commitments of the Austrian government in return for investments of the allegedly so rich uncle from Russia of that Latvian niece. Most of the other mass media in Germany and Austria bombarded Strache and Ibiza the next day did, and consequently not only a majority of the German-speaking population felt that the conditions for fulfilling Morlock's definition of demagoguery as mentioned above were fulfilled, but also the political leaders of the two nations. Strache - **who always stated he was "not guilty" at all** - was forced to step away from his political office immediately and a few weeks later even the entire Austrian government was asked to resign, which subsequently led to new elections in Austria. Still in 2019, Strache's populist party FPÖ was replaced by Austrias "Greens" in the new government formation. Voilà !

Surprisingly however, the demagogery begins to shift to the media outlets behind the Austrian government coup if one takes a closer look at the real circumstances behind the entire matter.

One would need to begin in 2016. At the beginning of that year **a person named Sascha Wandl criminally refers himself** at the Austrian anti-corruption bureau, as he was involved in industrial espionage through a company called KONSIC GmbH, carried out for the mechanical engineering company Plasser & Theurer against their competitor named 'System 7'. Actually, there may be only two reasons to report oneself for such activities: because one is in a dispute with one's own partners, or because someone from the outside pays for it and has a specific reason. Be it as it may, the **public prosecutor's office in Krems an der Donau** takes on the case and investigates the matter for almost three years. At the beginning of 2019, it was announced that the company managers of Plasser & Theurer were apparently "not informed about espionage activities" at their competitor. Surprisingly, the case is dropped, although **according to press reports from Austria** at least one person at Plasser & Theurer

was/is being investigated.

With the submission of the criminal referral from 2016, Sascha Wandl discontinues his work at KONSIC GmbH, whose company founder is an individual named Julian Hessenthaler, an Austrian national living in Vienna. He did not previously register his company KONSIC GmbH in Austria, but with the trade office in the Bavarian capital of Munich instead, and moved into a small office in the inner city of the secret German capital. According to press reports, KONSIC GmbH's deleted website stated that it offered security services for companies and organisations, its customers included the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and "governments from within Europe". Photos on the Internet suggest that Julian Hessenthaler may previously have had experience with the judiciary system earlier in his life.



Why in the world KONSIC's founder suddenly gets involved in a dubious real estate deal in 2017 which escalates into a huge Austrian political scandal remains a mystery. The matter began when, at the beginning of 2017 and about two years before KONSIC's in-house industrial espionage matter was dismissed by Krems' public prosecutor's office, a Viennese lawyer (apparently Iranian-born Dr. Ramin Mirfakhrai) called Viennese real estate agent Irena Markovic and asked if she would be a friend of the Gudenus couple, since he had a client from Latvia who would be interested in not only acquiring Gudenus' property in Vienna's Waldviertel for several million euros, but also "investing another 300 million".

According to press reports from Austria, on March 24, 2017, the Gudenus couple meets the realtor, the lawyer, the Latvian oligarch niece - who arrives in Hollywood-style with chauffeur and bodyguards - plus Julian Hessenthaler alias Julian Thaler for the first time. The Latvian prospective buyer visits the property afterwards and they meet again in Vienna about a month later, where it was probably already indicated that the Latvian oligarch niece enjoyed vacationing on the Spanish Island of Ibiza - what a coincidence, since Strache and Gudenus enjoy vacationing there as well regularly.

At the beginning of May 2017, the infamous meeting in Ibiza takes place, where Julian Hessenthaler is present in addition to the alleged oligarch niece sitting next to Strache and Gudenus. The room is bugged and equipped with miniature cameras that happily record seven hours of chatting under the influence of cocaine and vodka.

The recordings are stored on DVD - God knows who still had access to them - and soon after the Ibiza vacation Julian Hessenthaler's lawyer is trying to sell them. However, the purchase price of 2 million euros apparently scares off a number of Strache's political opponents in Austria. Only before the

European elections in 2019, and coincidentally a few months after the public prosecutor's office in Krems an der Donau had finally dropped Hessenthaler's espionage affair surrounding Plasser & Theurer, will they find what they are looking for: the lawyer is recommended to contact Germany.

According to reports from Rubikon, an NGO organisation named ZPS (based in Berlin) is negotiating with Hessenthaler's lawyer an amount of 600,000 Euros, paid apparently in gold coins (Kruegerrand) for tax and political reasons. Not the entire video is sold, but only seven carefully selected passages of the video and which are - since the seven video sections with a total duration of 2:53 minutes have now been passed on to the two Germanic press organisations "at no costs" after the ZPS organisation had apparently paid for them earlier - published by the Sueddeutsche Zeitung and the Spiegel soon after.

A year after the German media accused Strache of selling off Austrian sovereignty to Russian oligarchs for little money and personal gains as the carefully selected video passages in the German media suggest, newly released video sequences and transcripts published by the public prosecutor's office in Vienna in August 2020 portray a completely different picture. Strache had demonstrably - even under the influence of alcohol and/or possibly more - emphasized several times that he explicitly does not want to indulge in corruption, and that he would also not intend on "playing along" the "game of the East" at all:

**Strache:** "And I, there is no self-enrichment or other shit stories, there is no. Ok ? Rather, there is interest, what do we want politically, where do we want to go politically, what does the population get, what does the taxpayer get from it, and when an entrepreneur has a profit that's fine with me if it fits into the concept."

...

**Interviewer:** "I understand your position where you say okay, well, I can put myself in a position where I open myself up to corruption."

**Strache:** "No, I won't ! Never !"

...

**Interviewer:** "What if, ok if it happens, look, different possibilities, we will find a way ..."

**Strache:** "No, but it would be dishonest ... dishonest !"

...

**Strache:** "No, no, but now we are honest. With every other shit you make yourself vulnerable and I don't want to be vulnerable. I want to sleep soundly. I want to get up in the morning and say I am clean, and if so, then I'm doing something there. And that is the strength. And when I retire, I am happy when one or the other friend remembers me and says: okay, okay."

...

**Gudenus:** "Well that's okay, but in reality, we answered that. It is clear that there is something inside, but we're not doing anything illegal, period."

**Strache:** "Nothing."

**Gudenus:** "Yes, totally agree."

**Strache:** "And that is a very important point, but it is more honest and it is correct. The others do it differently. But that makes the difference."

Passages from the "Ibiza video" as published in August, 2020

When the Ibiza video producer was **hiding as a roommate** of a group of German refugee rescue ship activists in Berlin, he was arrested by local authorities in early 2021 and taken into custody. At the same time, **the Wirecard investigative committee** took place there. Julian H. agreed to be questioned by the German Bundestag members, since it was discovered that he **had an account at the Wirecard bank**. Shortly after, he was extradited to his homecountry Austria to speak to the investigational Ibiza committee there as well. According to the provisional stenographic protocol 19/29 II from March 5, 2021, the Ibiza producer Julian H. stated the following in front of Wirecard committee members in Berlin:

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann (SPD):** “You had reported about this movie sequence - it's still on Twitter, I noticed. But are you perhaps familiar with any image or sound recordings that you did not make ?”

**Julian H.:** “As I said, to the best of my knowledge, there is a video that could contain this topic, as is described in this sequence here. That should exist. Yes.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “OK. But that wasn't made by you.”

**Julian H.:** “No. But I was able to speak to someone who saw it, and someone who was there. Both confirm in terms of content that it took place.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “And do you know where that came about, in what context, when ?”

**Julian H.:** “In the offices of \*\*\*\*\* \*\* [a well-known restaurant owner in Vienna], I think shortly after the 2017 [Austrian] election.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “OK. And who was participating ?”

**Julian H.:** “Among others, the current [Austrian] Chancellor [Sebastian] Kurz and a few other ÖVP people and consorts.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “OK. So, let me summarise: You heard there was a meeting in the offices of \*\*\*\*\* \*\*, where Mr. [Federal Chancellor Sebastian] Kurz and other ÖVP members were there.”

**Julian H.:** “Among others.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “And this video was - it's hearsay - about what ?”

**Julian H.:** “It is, yes - excuse me.”

**Dr. Jens Zimmermann:** “I just wanted to know if you could briefly tell us again what in this video is...”

**Julian H.:** “The consumption and distribution of cocaine, based on rumors. So from hearsay.”

**"Ibiza detective shocks investigational committee"**, dated March, 18 2021

In this sense, the definition of the term demagoguery could be reworded explicitly for a few German press media as follows: at least two large German press organizations practice demagoguery because they publicly advertise a political goal when the opportunity arises by flattering the masses and in appealing to their feelings, instincts and prejudices; furthermore they are guilty of agitation and lies; they exaggerate the truth or represent it in a grossly simplified manner; they portray the cause they want to get through as the cause of anyone with well-meaning, and they display the way in which they intend on getting it through as the only possible one:

SPIEGEL and Sueddeutsche Zeitung have released to the public some passages from the more than six hours of material that have political significance, and are therefore of great public interest. **Private conversations captured by the hidden cameras do not belong into the public. (!)**

(Online 'Der Spiegel' article "**Why this way, why now, why at all ?**" about the Ibiza video from May 2019)

<https://www.sun24.news/en/the-demagog-press-coup-about-a-journalistic-austrian-putsch-from-germany.html>