



Nominated for the

Eyesore of the Year 2013



for outsourcing to G4S

Bundestheater Holding (Austrian Federal Theatre Holding) runs Burgtheater GmbH, Wiener Staatsoper GmbH and Volksoper Wien GmbH. With a share of 51,1% of the holding controls ART Theaterservice GmbH and ART FOR ART Kreativ-Werkstätten GmbH. The Bundestheater Holding is owned by the Republic of Austria and has a yearly budget of 232,5 Million Euro. The Holding employs 2.500 people.

In 1996 Bundestheater Holding has outsourced 400 ushers to G4S. The outsourcing had serious consequences for the ushers. About one third of them have part-time employment contracts, while the other two thirds are employed for a very little number of hours. According to their employment contracts, only 2 hours work per week are guaranteed. More hours are booked as needed. According to the seasonal contracts, there is a summer break from July to September, while each new seasonal contract begins with a new probation month. Nobody counts the pre-working time. The hourly payment fee is 8,17 EUR gross and is harmonized with the collective employment contract for the security industry.

On October 12, the usher Christian Diaz stepped on stage on the occasion of the 125th anniversary and held a speech on the company G4S by saying: "I am dreaming of a theater, which sets itself against the policy of outsourcing, privatization and growing injustice in our society. I am dreaming of a theater, which turns itself against the deportation of people, who are underpaid in other parts of the world and produce the products of our prosperity in misery".

The response came immediately. "On the grounds of lack of identification with the company philosophy and alleged damages to the brand, my employment contract was terminated without notice," said Diaz. G4S could fire him without notice, because Diaz was working for the third time on a probationary period.

G4S is not an unknown company. The security companies had already been involved in scandals related to human rights violations.

On the 12th of October 2010 G4S was executing an alien's deportation from the UK by plane (British Airways). On board was the Angolese Jimmy Mubenga. During the flight Mubenga must have, according to passengers, complained of respiratory problems. Several G4S employees powerfully pressed his upper body minutes long, their action resulting in the death of Jimmy Mubenga at the end. Meanwhile, the British Home Office ended the contract with G4S.

G4S specializes in the privatization of originally state-operated facilities, such as prisons. G4S employees tortured prisoners of a G4S operated facility in Mangaung / South Africa with electric shocks and forced injections.

In November 2013, the G4S signed a contract for the operation of a "detention-center" in the Styrian municipality Vordernberg in Austria. Value of the contract: 68 million euro. Until 2029 G4S commissioned to manage a deportation prison. This is an absolute novelty in Austria, as, unlike in the UK or in the USA, only officials of the executive or military de-

pendents can have such assignments. Private companies cannot be used for sovereign tasks like running a prison. Upon the Austrian law it is not legal to outsource core functions of the state.

There are also disputes related to the form of the contract used to operate the Styrian detention center. The Greens have complained in writing to the Public Ministry with regard to the constitutionality of out-sourcing sovereign duties of the police, as well as about nepotism and corruption when commissioning the contract.

On the company's website, G4S points out its own Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy: "G4S plays an important role in society by helping people to work in a safe environment in which they can grow and prosper. The contract with the "Bundestheater Holding" is a figleaf for G4S to brush up the image of the company in Austria.

And the reaction of the Bundestheater Holding? Managing Director, Mr. Georg Springer, explains: "If I work with a supplier, I do not care with whom else he contracts, as long as there are not any proven dubious business practices". And further more: "Just because someone operates a detention center, it does not automatically mean that private rights are violated. It depends on how it is being operated."

For Springer, there is no impediment to the continuation of the status quo: "In theory, these contracts could be terminated every year but I see no reason in doing so." In late December, after he had faced some public pressure, Springer back-pedaled and explained: "We consider whether we should reinsource the whole thing again", but upon one condition: this should not cost more than under the actual conditions (with G4S). Springer demands a separate wage agreement. Upon him, it is "just a matter of arithmetic." Bundestheater Holding did not react in any way to NeSoVe request on the outsourcing.

NeSoVe considers the outsourcing to G4S as socially irresponsible of the Bundestheater Holding. NeSoVe requires the cancellation of the agreement. Additionally, public companies should be role models. A blacklist of companies is needed which are not eligible for contracting anymore. Companies with dubious employment policies and those violating human rights should be excluded. NeSoVe rejects the privatization of originally sovereign services (such as prisons administration). NeSoVe calls for the permanent employment for the 400 ushers by the Bundestheater Holding because fair working conditions should be a "must" for the public sector. The ushers should not be treated less favorably than other employees of the Bundestheater Holding. Christian Diaz is to be rehired immediately and should get a financial compensation for the loss of income since he was fired.



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