



**Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
at the vigil for the victims of the terrorist attack in Hanau
in Hanau Market Square
on 20 February 2020**

I stand here before you as Federal President, as a citizen of this country, as a person who, like you, like us all, is struggling to find words this evening. What happened, what occurred here in Hanau, has left us speechless. It has saddened us. And it has also made us angry.

What happened is appalling. One of the things we all fear the most came to pass: loved ones died. Nothing can take away this pain. Nothing can explain this senseless deed. And nothing can undo it.

Many of you here tonight feel bereft, disorientated, abandoned. But that is exactly why it does us good to gather here to mourn together in silence. Standing here in this square right now, we feel that we are not alone. In more than fifty towns across Germany, thousands of people, probably tens of thousands of people, have gathered at this very hour to hold vigils and to remember the victims of Hanau.

This gives us a sense of community, the knowledge that we are united in our outrage and anger with others who are unafraid to show their grief, sympathy and solidarity. This is a sense of community that we all need, that every society needs – it is what holds society together.

Ten people have been torn from our midst. They were taken by a brutal act of terrorism, a violent deed that serves as a grim reminder of Walter Lübcke's murder and the synagogue attack in Halle. For that is the aim of terrorism: to spread terror, instil fear and sow division through violence and killing.

Now is the time for us to demonstrate that we stand together. We will not be intimidated. We will not be divided. We mourn. We grieve together, and we see that we are united in our grief, united against hatred, racism and violence. I stand shoulder to shoulder with those threatened by racist hatred. And together we stand shoulder to

shoulder against violence and against language that marginalises and degrades, that all too often paves the way for violence.

Let us shoulder the responsibility that each and every one of us should bear, and use language with care – in politics, in the media and everywhere we go. Let's speak up for individuals or minorities in our country whenever they are humiliated!

The shooting has left a deep wound in this town. A wound that will only heal if we display unity not only in this hour of terror, but also in the days to come; if we are considerate and show solidarity, and thereby give the grieving families strength and succour. Consideration and solidarity are also vital for society as a whole, if we wish to preserve cohesion in our country.

That is why I ask you, my compatriots, to respond to today's horror by showing consideration, showing solidarity, in this time of sorrow. We stand together. We stick together. We want to live together, and we will make this known as often as necessary. This is our most powerful antidote to hate.

Thank you very much.