

## Dental political New Year's reception

# Protect democracy—outlaw racism

The New Year's reception of the German Dental Association (BZÄK) and the German Federal Association of Statutory Health Insurance Dentists (KZBV) took place on 30 January at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin.



The boards of the KZBV and the BZÄK (left to right): Dr Karl-Georg Pochhammer, Dr Ute Maier, Martin Hendges, Prof. Christoph Benz, Dr Romy Ermler and Konstantin von Laffert.



BZÄK President Christoph Benz delivering his New Year's address to invited guests from the world politics and dentistry at the Berlin Museum of Natural History.

In his welcoming speech, BZÄK President Prof. Christoph Benz called for confidence in democracy. He expressed his shock at the right-wing extremist meeting that had taken place in Potsdam in November. He pointed out that our health system would be unthinkable without the great commitment of staff with an immigrant background.

He also called on federal politicians to finally tackle the many problems in outpatient care. Currently, the underfunding of periodontitis treatment in particular is jeopardising local care. If the Federal Ministry of Health wants to improve the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases, it is important to finally enter into a discussion with the dental profession, as there are interactions be-

tween periodontitis and cardiovascular diseases. There is also an urgent need to restore the former attractiveness of dentistry in private practice and make it fit for the future. This requires an effective strengthening of dental and medical practices.

The BZÄK has already put forward ideas in its Warnemünde Declaration. In addition, the regulation announced by the Federal Minister of Health at the end of 2022 to effectively control outside capital and ownership in the health system must finally be tackled and excessive bureaucracy reduced. The BZÄK has submitted various proposals to this end and is open to discussion at any time.

Dr Kirsten Kappert-Gonther (Member of the Bundestag, Green Party), emphasised

that democrats must stand up for democracy together and make their voices heard. She congratulated dentistry for putting prevention at the forefront of its activities. Others, she said, could take a leaf out of its book. The treatment of periodontitis should and will be discussed.

Martin Hendges, Chairman of the Board of the KZBV, called for the budgeting system—reintroduced by the Statutory Health Insurance Financial Stabilisation Act—to be abolished once and for all. In view of the alarming situation in dental care, periodontal treatment should be immediately exempted from budget restrictions.

Source: *klartext* 1/2024, BZÄK