

Bank trials in Zurich: Scientists criticize the statements of the chief prosecutor and the exclusion of experts

In Zurich, the first-instance verdict against the climate activists who protested in front of Credit Suisse in the summer of 2019 was handed down on May 14, 2021. The climate and financial experts submitted by the defense for hearing were all rejected by lead prosecutor Daniel Kloiber and the judge Marius Weder (SP). The level of knowledge of the lead prosecutor Mr. Daniel Kloiber regarding climate change, as presented in court, raises big questions. In various sections of his plea, he doubted the urgency and the serious consequences of the climate crisis. These serious inaccuracies have been documented in an open letter, signed by twelve Swiss climate specialists. The letter also receives support from Zurich politicians.

Whereas the chief prosecutor described the climate activists in court as a "mob staging some poor amateur theater to spread false alarms"¹, these twelve prominent specialists protest the exclusion of expert testimony and affirm that the statements of prosecutor Kloiber include serious inaccuracies and false statements (see the attached open letter).

The local councilor Julia Hofstetter (Green Party, Zurich) has followed the trials with interest and states: "A public prosecutor who concocts his own climate doctrine and, on this basis, decides what is supposed to be legal! That is shocking. The public prosecutor's office is not a religious community after all. Their work must be based on scientific evidence."

Contradictions of the Office of the Public Prosecutor

In retrospect, several questions arise regarding the prosecution's plea:

- How can the Office of the Public Prosecutor consider itself in a position to judge the proportionality of an action without sound knowledge of the factual situation?
- How can the Office of the Public Prosecutor refuse to consider the scientific report 'Banking on Climate Change Report 2021' because it is written in English, but simultaneously presumes to have understood Credit Suisse's investment strategy and intentions on the basis of two numbers drawn precisely from this same report?
- How can the Office of the Public Prosecutor invoke a State monopoly on the use of force, while allowing the senior public prosecutor to exercise his delegated power and privileges with an evaluation of the latest findings of climate research based on subjective feelings and a Wikipedia article (on the subject of forest dieback)?

Frida Kohlmann, media spokesperson of Collective Climate Justice comments: "Reasoned judgments need the testimony of scientific experts, not prosecutors who deny the urgency of climate change and the severity of its impacts! We therefore appeal to the Supreme Court at the next hearing to listen to the expert witnesses and not evade the serious and complex challenges posed by the climate crisis".

The 9 climate activists and their defense have already filed an appeal against the verdict.

[1] District Court ZH, 12.05.2021, Volkshaus ZH: Verbatim transcript of the plea of the prosecutor.

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Photos of the action of 8.7.2019 (for free use):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/182591369@N08/albums>

Photos of the solidarity rallies in front of the Volkshaus (for free use):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/182591369@N08/albums/72157719155071743>

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About us:

Behind the July 2019 action "Fossil Banks - Too Big to Stay" is Collective Climate Justice, as well as individuals and other activists from various groups, such as Collectif BreakFree. As a movement, we all stand in solidarity for climate justice and a livable future for all.