Hans-Christian Ströbele  
Fraktion Bündnis 90/Die Grünen  
Platz der Republik 1  
11011 Berlin  

Friday, 1 August 2014  

Dear Hans-Christian Ströbele,  

Thank you for agreeing to accept this letter. As the first politician to meet Edward Snowden in Moscow and an early advocate of Mr Snowden travelling to Germany to inform the Bundestag about mass surveillance in person, we appreciate all you have done to ensure the significance of Edward Snowden’s revelations is recognised in public life. We trust this message will reach those it needs to, and appreciate your assistance in its distribution.  

We are writing on behalf of Edward Snowden’s supporters in Germany, calling on their government to provide a safe haven for Mr Snowden.  

Courage runs Edward Snowden’s official defence fund. Today it is exactly one year since he was offered temporary one year asylum by the Government of the Russia Federation, after a month stranded in Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport.  

Edward Snowden faces harsh prosecution and persecution in the United States for revealing to his fellow citizens the government’s illegal spying. He faces at least three charges, including two under the 1917 Espionage Act, which was written not with whistleblowers but with WWI spies in mind. As things stand today, Edward Snowden would not be able to present a public interest defence. He would face decades in prison and the possibility of unlawful treatment like that experienced by US military whistleblower Chelsea Manning while awaiting trial on similar charges.  

In June this year, Courage launched a campaign to show that concern for Edward Snowden’s safety resonates worldwide. We asked supporters to submit photos showing that they Stand With Snowden and that they want their governments to offer him protection. We promised to send a letter to the governments of the three countries where the response was greatest to ask them to respond to this call.  

As the date of Edward Snowden’s asylum renewal draws close, citizens from 38 countries have taken part in Courage’s Stand With Snowden campaign - and Germany is one of the top three responding countries.
Edward Snowden’s revelations impact on every country in the world, but we know that Germans have taken them particularly to heart.

Thanks to Edward Snowden, revelations have been published and reported worldwide about the monitoring of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s personal mobile phone - as well as the phone of every German Chancellor since 2002. We learned that the scale of metadata being harvested by the NSA in Germany is significantly larger than any other European country. We learned that the FISA Court has certified any communications related to ‘Germany’ as a valid foreign intelligence target. Thanks to Edward Snowden, we now know that communications are intercepted from the US embassy in Berlin.

We know that the German public appreciates Edward Snowden’s contribution and wants to see him remain safe. Opinion polls show that a majority of Germans think that their country should be offering Edward Snowden asylum, with strong support across the party political divide. (TNS Enmíd, 2014) Hundreds of thousands of Germans have signed petitions calling on Chancellor Angela Merkel to grant Edward Snowden asylum. One petition alone has gained over 200,000 signatures.

Edward Snowden has been awarded the Fritz Bauer Prize and the Berliner Prize for Civic Courage. He received this year’s Whistleblower Prize co-sponsored by the Federation of German Scientists, the German section of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and the German chapter of Transparency International. German parliamentarians are among a number across Europe that have nominated Edward Snowden for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize.
It was as a result of Edward Snowden’s revelations that the German Government cancelled its contract with the US telecommunications giant Verizon, citing privacy concerns as cause. The Bundestag investigation into surveillance of German communications continues and we hope that Edward Snowden will be able to help the committee with its inquiries in due course. Moreover, the revelation of US double-agents in Germany, one of whom was tasked with subverting that very inquiry, has led to a historic change in German security policy.

On this issue, the will of the German public is clear: they want Edward Snowden to be afforded protection and they think he should be offered asylum in Germany.

Offering asylum would show that the German government respects the desires of the German people. It would send a strong signal about the need for decisive action to defend European privacy and associational rights. It would also show future Edward Snowdens that Germany will stand by those individuals whose courageous actions benefit Germany.

We ask that the German government do whatever is in its power to ensure that Edward Snowden remains safe in the face of real and significant threats: to offer him asylum, to afford safe passage to speak to the ongoing Bundestag inquiry, and to encourage other countries to take similar measures. We ask that the German government do the right thing: protect Edward Snowden now.

Thank you for passing on this message.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Assange
Trustee of Courage

Gavin MacFadyen
Trustee of Courage

Sarah Harrison
Acting Director of Courage

Notes:
TNS Enmid 2014