

March 2025
Edition



Racism Report 2024

Analysis of racist attacks
& structures in Austria



Health for all?
How racism makes us sick

Starke Zeichen.

Starker Bezirk.

Bezirksvorsteherin Silvia Jankovic

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are only implied, in order to not reproduce them. ZARA is committed to speaking out against racism towards Roma and Sinti, and avoids the use and implication of the G-word, as both can be retraumatising. The term Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPoC) is a self-designated term of people subjected to racism.

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Editorial

Rita Isiba

Managing director
of ZARA

'Implausible', 'hysterical' or 'whiny' – racialised patients all too often receive such labels when seeking medical help. Who is believed, and which complaints are taken seriously, isn't just based on symptoms, but rather deeply rooted racist and discriminatory structures. These influence not only individual diagnoses but also shape the entire healthcare system.

The depth of this structural racism can be seen in Austria's medical system: medical professionals, nursing staff and patients frequently report discrimination, which has a massive impact on the quality of care. Incorrect diagnoses – or no diagnosis at all – more limited access to adequate care and racist prejudices subject many to unnecessary risks, which leads at times to dramatic consequences, as shown by some incidents in this report.

At the same time, we are observing the current deterioration of the public discourse with great concern. In a time where fascist powers are growing stronger, we are experiencing how racist and exclusionary rhetoric is not just taking up more space but finding greater legitimacy. This development isn't just an abstract problem – it has very concrete effects. It emboldens those with already existing racist resentments. Through isolation, exclusion and alienation, it leads to greater societal division. And it aggravates the social threat towards people with migrant backgrounds.

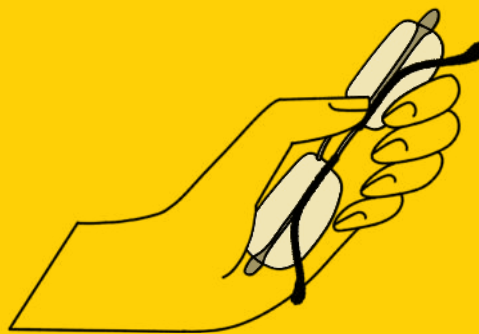
The discursive shift towards greater exclusion and alienation is also reflected in the cases reported to ZARA. Our statistics show that racism in Austria is in no way limited to face-to-face encounters – around 60% of the cases reported to us

took place online. Hate speech, threats and digital harassment have a significant psychological impact on those affected. Those repeatedly met with ignorance or prejudice lose trust not only in state institutions but frequently in society itself. Anxiety, depression, and feeling unsafe in society are the reality for many who experience racism.

This is where ZARA's work comes in: documenting the experiences of those who encounter discrimination and hate makes it clear how urgently victims require legal *and* psychosocial support. At our counselling centre, we ensure that victims of racist incidents are heard and have a trustworthy contact point with which to protect themselves. Whether it's discrimination due to ethnicity, nationality or religion, we support people affected by racism and help witnesses to fight actively against injustice.

An essential cornerstone of our work is its intersectional perspective. Discrimination is rarely singular – often, various forms of prejudice overlap, for example, based on gender, economic status or religion. Recognising this complexity requires an individualised and high-quality counselling practice. Without an intersectional approach, the experiences of many of those affected remain unheard, leaving them to deal with systemic discrimination on their own.

Our goal is not just to work through individual cases but also to make structural and institutional barriers visible, as this is the only way to make sustainable changes.



The yearly Racism Report is a central tool for this visibility. This year, we're placing particular focus on racism in healthcare and the way racism impacts the health of those who experience it. We decided on this topic because racial discrimination in healthcare has especially grave – potentially life-threatening – consequences. ZARA has seen that the psychological burden for victims is enormous and that they often have little means to protect themselves due to entrenched hierarchies of power and inadequate contact points. As such, this report not only documents racist abuses but also offers concrete solutions. To this end, we've requested experts enrich this report with their knowledge and have shared insights from our counselling centre !AgainstRacism – which has now existed for over 25 years.

Twenty-five years of ZARA – we celebrated this anniversary in September 2024 with a large 'ZARA:MONIE' at Kulturhaus Brotfabrik together with numerous allies. This event once again reminded us that we can only create a society in which everyone has equal opportunities and is protected from racism by working together. Without our community, our work would be impossible. The exchange with engaged individuals from the fields of science, politics, economics, civil society, art and media enriches our perspective and makes it possible for us to develop innovative solutions for the societal problems we are striving to overcome every day. Fighting against racism is not an individual task – bringing about actual change requires a broad alliance.

Another essential pillar of our work is having a secure financial foundation. We depend on grants, partnerships and do-

nations in order to offer victims adequate support and fight against discrimination consistently. It's the only way we can ensure that hate crimes are brought to light and that we can consistently work against them.

Without ZARA, many opportunities for equal treatment and participation would be lost. Our commitment to an anti-racist society should not only raise awareness among people but also encourage them to take an active stand against discrimination – because a self-determined and dignified life should be possible for everyone.

The vision for an inclusive society requires more than just good intentions. We must act decisively for a future where solidarity, respect and equality are central. Scan the QR code below to learn more about our intersectional work and to take part actively.



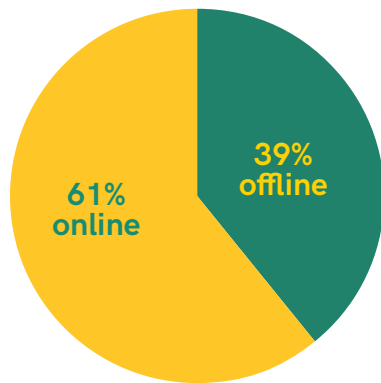
Rita Isiba

As the managing director of ZARA, she is committed to social justice and promoting inclusive working and living environments. Additionally, the economist teaches Community Engagement and Empowerment as part of the master's programme for Applied Human Rights at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Photo: Ina Aydogan

Data and analysis 2024

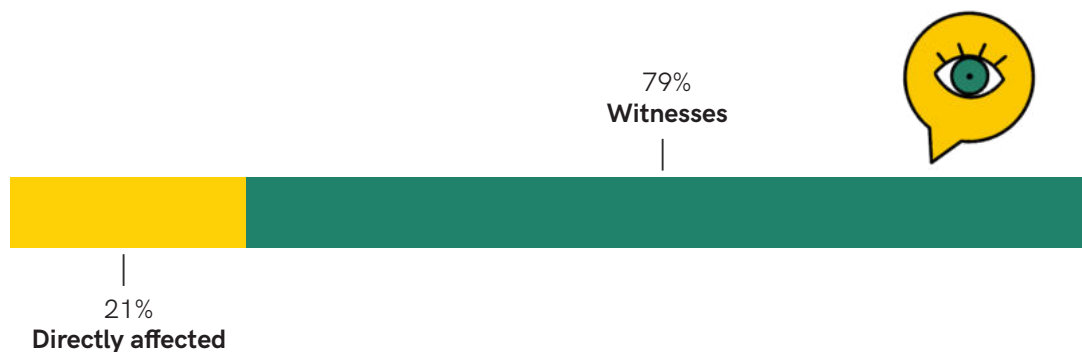
In 2024, ZARA documented and handled **1,647** reports of racism. **1,009** reports (**61%**) were for racist incidents online.



'Racist statements on the internet are visible to a particularly large number of people and are relatively easy to report. This leads to a comparatively high number of reports of racist incidents online.'

Claudia Grobner, ZARA counsellor

Racism that takes place offline is more frequently reported by the victim themselves. Online racism is reported largely by witnesses – who accounted for **8** out of **10** reports.



'At ZARA, those affected can tell their stories in safer spaces. We listen, evaluate the options, intervene and set priorities together. There's not always a quick or satisfactory solution for a racist experience. However, a relief intervention – ideally in the first meeting – is a huge help for victims.'

Maria Al-Mahayni, ZARA counsellor

'ZARA counsellors are also facilitators. We connect victims with other counselling centres to ensure the best possible support – for example, for complex neighbourhood conflicts. Close cooperation with partner organisations increases the opportunities available for action.'

Golrokh Haddad, ZARA counsellor

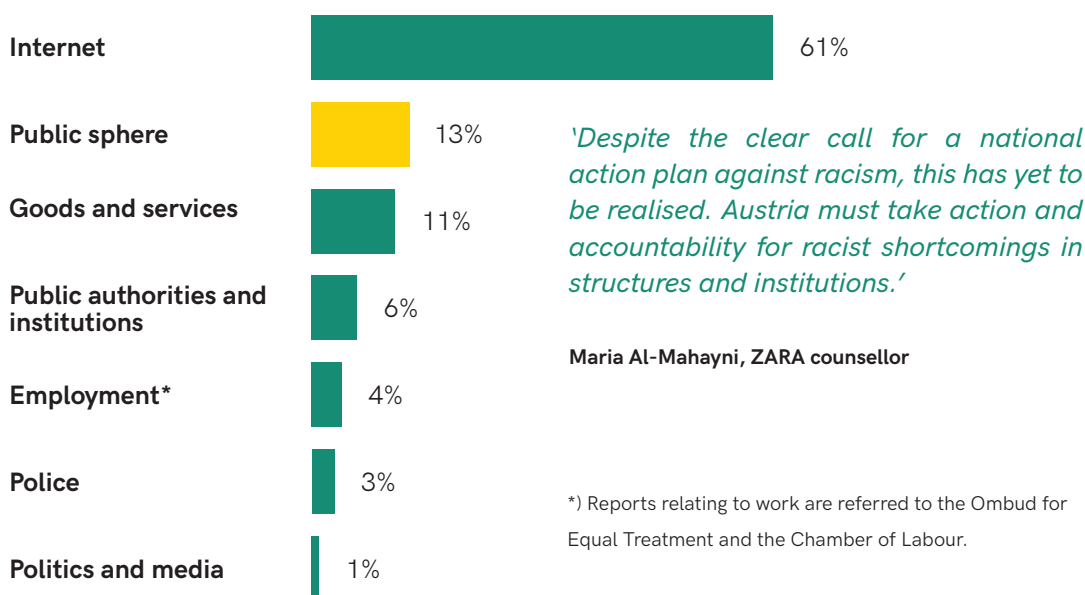
In 2024, ZARA provided individual counselling for reports of racism 1,489 times – particularly via email (50%), telephone (39%) or in person at ZARA's office (7%). Many clients found the personal relief intervention to be particularly effective.



Report racist incidents, whether online or offline, conveniently through our online form! You can easily upload relevant photos and screenshots – including anonymously.



Racism is evident in all areas of life, on both a structural and individual level. In more than 1 of 10 cases, racist incidents took place in public – for example on the street, in parks or on public transport.



Nearly a quarter of reports in the public sphere involved racist graffiti. In 2024, requests for the removal of racist graffiti were successful in 91% of cases.

'Reporting makes a difference – both for the reporter themselves, in that they feel heard and understood, and their community, because racist posts or graffiti can be removed from public spaces.'

Hizra Chaudhry-Bećirović, ZARA counsellor

Racism in healthcare: 'The person is forgotten'

Thirty-seven of the reports received by ZARA in 2024 were related to the healthcare sector.

In 2024, a patient informed ZARA that he experienced racial harassment from nurses in the hospital. They made anti-Muslim statements, mocked him and also exploited data from his patient file to do so. The patient sought counselling to improve the quality of the rest of his stay; seeking punishment for the nurses was not his priority.

'Racism in healthcare manifests as verbal abuse, microaggressions, bigoted insults, bullying, and discriminatory or negligent treatment, and occurs in various places such as doctors' offices, hospitals and care facilities. In particular, those in a vulnerable, dependent position – whether as patients or employees – are frequently affected.'

Fiorentina Azizi-Hacker, head of the ZARA
Counselling Centre

An anonymous witness reported that in a Viennese hospital, two senior physicians and a specialist regularly made discriminatory statements. The doctors not only made racist statements (some of which met the threshold for criminal offences) but also misogynistic and homophobic remarks, frequently in the presence of staff and patients. The incidents were not reported internally; however, ZARA was informed of them for documentation purposes.

'Power imbalances in the healthcare sector are systematically exploited for racist behaviour. At the same time, an effective institutional framework for addressing complaints is missing. Therefore, many reports in the healthcare sector are submitted anonymously; victims and witnesses rarely find satisfactory means for action.'

Maria Al-Mahayni, ZARA counsellor

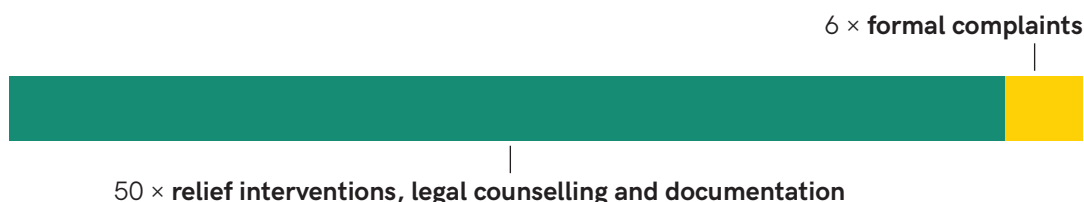


The Ministry of the Interior has been equipping police officers in Austria with body worn cams (BWC) on a broad scale since autumn 2024. The cameras are intended to aid de-escalation, protect officers and preserve evidence. However, the BWCs are not always on – rather, police officers can decide when to turn them on based on the situation.

Police



Formal complaints were filed in only **6** of **56** cases of racist police violence.



* A mediation talk (→ Glossary, p. 71) took place for three of the six formal complaints.

Clients use ZARA's services in place of formal complaints – relief interventions, legal advice, drafting letters of intervention and accompaniment to authorities.

'For years now, ZARA has been calling attention to the fact that it's challenging for victims of racist police violence to exercise their rights. Within the police force, there is often a lack of access, insight and institutional learning. The strong cop culture and legal framework make it difficult to address misconduct professionally. Instead, the risk of reversing the victim and offender is extremely high.'

The structural problems in the police force lead to many victims refraining from making formal complaints. Complaint procedure reforms are needed to give victims more agency.

'Improving the complaints procedure in cases of racist police violence requires a reversal of the burden of proof, as stipulated in the Equal Treatment Act. As such, in cases of discrimination, the defendant – in this case, the police – would have to prove that there was no unequal treatment. This would relieve victims of the burden of proving that racism took place. Furthermore, the deadline for submitting a formal complaint should be extended. Currently, this is only six weeks – far too short a period to gather the time and energy to seek counselling and draft a complaint after a traumatising experience.'

Désirée Sandanasamy, head specialist for law, enforcement of rights and hate crime prevention

While ZARA sees the large-scale implementation of BWCs as an important step, we are critical of their activation being solely at the officers' discretion. Instead, police officers should be required to turn on the cameras before the direct use of force. Ideally, videos should also be saved a few minutes before they're turned on. This is the only way BWCs can serve to protect residents' fundamental rights.

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“

In Wien, der lebenswertesten Stadt der Welt, ist kein Platz für Diskriminierung – nicht auf unseren Straßen, nicht in unseren Schulen und erst recht nicht dort, wo Menschen Hilfe und Unterstützung suchen: im Gesundheitssystem. Rassistische Diskriminierung im Gesundheitsbereich ist nicht nur eine Verletzung der Würde, sondern gefährdet die Gesundheit und das Leben.

Wir sagen ganz klar: Jede*r hat das Recht auf eine respektvolle Behandlung. Diskriminierung und Vorurteile haben in unserer Stadt keinen Platz. Wir in Wien werden immer entschieden und mit aller Kraft gegen Diskriminierung vorgehen. Für ein Gesundheitssystem, das niemanden zurücklässt. Für eine Stadt, die für alle da ist.



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Colonial legacies: How racism continues to impact medicine

Caroline Schmüser from ZARA spoke with Mireille Ngosso and Malik Fofana about racist legacies in the Austrian healthcare system – and what we can do about it.

ZARA: *I'll start with a personal question: what moved you both to become doctors?*

Fofana: After school, I began my civilian service as a paramedic at Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, where I got my first insight into professional life and the social sector. I enjoyed both the social work and the intellectual examination of the human body.

Ngosso: I received my Matura later through second-chance education after leaving school at 16. Originally, I wanted to be a nurse – I was inspired by my godmother, a paediatrician who often took me with her to her office. After getting my Matura, I decided to study medicine to heal people and perhaps work in Congo as a doctor someday.

ZARA: *Do you feel that your studies in Vienna gave you the necessary knowledge to provide people with the best possible medical or psychosocial care?*

Ngosso: We have an excellent education system in Vienna. But sadly, it's also quite biased. It was only after entering professional life that it became clear to me that I was lacking essential resources due to my conservative, normative medical training.

Topics such as diversity or illnesses outside of a Eurocentric perspective were hardly mentioned, although they would be highly relevant in a city like Vienna, where every third person has a migrant background.

Fofana: Absolutely. This was also the case for me. Particularly in subjects where one might assume that people with a different skin colour would also need to be represented, such as dermatology. Overall, the portrayal of Black people was limited to stereotypical associations with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis or AIDS, while a diverse and realistic perspective was utterly absent.

ZARA: *Let's take a look at the historical context: racism in medicine has deep roots in the colonial legacy of Europe and Austria, which is often suppressed. Mireille Ngosso, you've previously pointed out that colonial powers carried out 'medical experiments' on colonised and enslaved people. What role did medical personnel play in this?*

Ngosso: The abuse that took place in the history of medicine, especially during and after the colonial era, has hardly been addressed to this day. It is neither taught nor mentioned, and future generations are not made aware of it, though this is precisely what's needed to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes. One example from the US is the gynaecologist James Marion Sims, who

carried out experiments on Black women without their consent. Or the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, where Black men with syphilis were not informed of their illness or treated for it, even though a cure, penicillin, was available. The aim was to observe the effects of the disease – with devastating consequences for those affected. There are similar examples in Europe as well. Robert Koch, a celebrated microbiologist, conducted experiments on sleeping sickness in East Africa without informing the patients or asking for their consent. Many Africans lost their lives in the process. However, these crimes are rarely mentioned, and Koch is still revered to this day. There is an urgent need to acknowledge these chapters in the history of medicine. Healthcare institutions were formed at a time when racist prejudices and stereotypes against marginalised groups were deeply rooted. These structures and thought patterns persist to this day and are passed down generationally. To dismantle them, we need to talk about them and raise awareness.

ZARA: *The colonial past has not only influenced medical knowledge but has also left behind structural thought patterns that still have an impact today. How exactly does this manifest itself in current medical practice?*

Fofana: These thought patterns not only affect medicine, but society as a whole. Terms such as evolution, social Darwinism and eugenics have supported the (so-called) 'race theory' for centuries. Even if we reject them today, they're deeply rooted in our ways of thinking – often subconsciously. This is particularly clear in medicine. Even now, Black people are often considered inferior, and persistent stereotypes remain: for example, that Black people have thicker skin or feel less pain. These prejudices are not malicious, but learned. Nevertheless, they have real impacts – particularly in the field of medicine.

Ngosso: These ideas date back to the colonial era and slavery and still have an impact today. The claim that Black people or certain groups feel less pain is pure pseudoscience – and yet this is still taught and practised in some cases. In clinics, for example, we encounter the assumption that people from the Mediterranean region exaggerate their pain. There's no scientific basis for this – pain is pain. The only difference is how various cultures express themselves. In order to give patients adequate treatment, we need to recognise and break down these colonial stereotypes.

ZARA: *Are there other concrete examples?*

Ngosso: Yes, for example, with medical algorithms. In certain medical calculations, such as for kidney function, an 'ethnic correction factor' is applied to Black people – even though it has been scientifically proven that there is no biological basis for this distinction. This practice comes from the colonial era, when Black people were perceived as stronger. As a result, Black patients may receive necessary treatment later – or not at all.

ZARA: *In addition to racism, other structural factors such as socioeconomic status and gender also play a role when it comes to inequalities in medical care.*

Ngosso: Yes, exactly. An example of this would be the high maternal mortality rate of Black women in the US – they die twice as often in childbirth as *white* women. This is often attributed solely to race, but many other factors play a role: socioeconomic status, worse access to healthcare, lack of education and much more. Instead of considering these complex causes, the focus is often exclusively on ethnicity – and that's a big problem.



Mireille Ngosso

is a doctor, activist and author. She works as a lecturer at various universities and is committed to a decolonial perspective in healthcare. In 2020, Ngosso organised the Black Lives Matter demo in Vienna, which attracted more than 50,000 people.

Photo: Minitta Photography

Fofana: It's also striking that most relevant studies are from Anglophone countries. We have hardly any figures or funding for research in this area here. There's a lack of awareness that this is a relevant topic – but also a lobby that stands up for people with a migrant background.

ZARA: *Taking a positive look into the future – what do we need to continually counteract racist and colonial ways of thinking in medicine?*

Fofana: I consider anti-racist education – beginning in childhood – to be essential. Racism in medicine isn't an isolated issue – from early on, we have to learn what racism is, where it comes from and how it impacts our lives. Critical self-reflection is equally important. You have to confront racist structures before you can separate yourself from them. Simply distancing yourself without understanding the problem will not bring about any real change.

Ngosso: Teachers must receive anti-racist training. However, this is only possible if teachers know how to deal with racism and educate children accordingly. Our education system desperately needs changes in this regard. Another critical point is research. Black people and other marginalised groups need to be more involved so that there is sufficient data and that people perceived as female, PoC and Black people – marginalised groups in general – are also seen as the norm so that we as healthcare professionals can treat all people adequately.

ZARA: *Both of these approaches address areas of research and school education. But what can doctors do? In what ways can they contribute to the decolonisation of medicine or, at least, anti-racist practices?*

Ngosso: Education, education, education – this is crucial. All of us have prejudices and stereotypes. What's important is not to be defensive but to pause, recognise and actively counteract them. There are already several books about racism in medicine and the history of medicine, which have data and facts that you can use for your further education.

Fofana: We need to focus on people as a whole – not just their bodies. In my experience, I often notice that we learn a lot about clinical pictures and symptoms but ignore patients' individual concerns, fears and personalities. This also includes dealing with issues outside of purely bodily complaints – be it racism, sexism or other social factors that influence health.

Ngosso: Including during training and in the medical field in general. And not just doctors – all staff should have this awareness as part of their training.

Fofana: Another important point is the matter of representation. We need more Black professors, more Black doctors, and – above all – Black decision-makers.

ZARA: *Are there any other relevant steps that need to be taken to improve the situation in the long term?*

Ngosso: There's an urgent need for independent complaint offices and necessary support in the form of supervision. Racism is a reality in the healthcare system. Those affected must be able to turn to these offices without worrying or fearing negative consequences. There must be consequences for racist behaviour. Mandatory quality standards are also needed to actively combat systemic racism in healthcare, including anti-racism audits in clinics and multilingual and culturally sensitive patient information services.

Fofana: On the political side, I think there needs to be an awareness and clarity that racism is omnipresent in all areas of life and institutions. Therefore, we need a legal framework that protects and supports those affected.

ZARA: *Thank you very much for the interview, your perceptions and the insights into your work.*

Malik Fofana
works as an assistant doctor for paediatrics in a Vienna city hospital. Since 2023, he has been holding seminars on racism in healthcare as an external lecturer at the Medical University of Vienna.



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'Medical gaslighting' – when patients have to fight for a diagnosis

'Medical gaslighting' describes patients' health complaints being dismissed or ignored by medical professionals, often without sufficient examination and diagnosis. The term 'gaslighting' comes from the 1938 thriller play *Gas Light* by Patrick Hamilton. In the play, a man uses deliberate manipulation to portray his wife as 'crazy' and steal her fortune. In contrast to the original context, medical gaslighting is usually not a matter of deliberate manipulation but rather a behaviour based on prejudices, gaps in knowledge and a paternalistic understanding of the doctor-patient relationship.¹

How does discrimination and racism lead to medical gaslighting?

There's pressure on patients to leave the doctor's office quickly. A quick and easy solution is to ask patients, 'Are you stressed?' Because who isn't stressed? Doctors then often describe the symptoms as 'psychosomatic' or 'functional' – and shift responsibility onto the patient².

Women and racialised people, in particular, are frequently affected by medical gaslighting³. An intersectional perspective (→ Glossary, p. 71) is therefore critical:

for a fat, queer Black woman with visible disabilities and low income, there is quite literally no room in the doctor's office. The further patients deviate from the image of the *white*, well-off, cis-heterosexual young man without a disability, the more often healthcare professionals fail to take pain and complaints seriously and perceive legitimate concerns as 'special requests' – such as patients' demands for blood tests, ultrasounds or X-ray examinations.

Specific causes of medical gaslighting can be easily identified using racism as an example: textbooks, for example, show dermatological diseases almost exclusively on *white* skin, resulting in doctors with gaps in their knowledge. However, because of the medical habitus of infallibility, they're often unprepared to examine this – let alone admit it. Another example is medical devices such as the pulse oximetre⁴: the finger clip measures the pulse and oxygen saturation in the blood. The problem is that it's calibrated for *white* skin. The incorrect values that result from this can cause doctors to assess the health status of BIPoC as better than it actually is.

These circumstances are coupled with the colonial prejudice that people from the Mediterranean region exaggerate their complaints. This racist pseudo-diagnosis is termed 'Morbus Mediterraneus'. A true example from a standard doctor's office: A Muslim woman wearing a hijab visited the practice repeatedly because of abdominal

1 Isaac KS Ng, Sarah ZL Tham, Gaurav Deep Singh, Christopher Thong and Desmond B. Theo. 'Medical gaslighting: A new colloquialism'. *The American Journal of Medicine* (2024): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2024.06.022>

2 Shravani Durbhakula and Auguste H. Fortin VI. 'Turning down the flame on Medical Gaslighting'. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* (2023): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-023-08302-4>

3 Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM). 'Rassismus und seine Symptome: Bericht des Nationalen Diskriminierungs- und Rassismusmonitors' (2023)

4 Sabina Schwachenwalde. 'Ungleich behandelt – Warum unser Gesundheitssystem die meisten Menschen diskriminiert.' Goldmann Verlag (2024)

pain. In the past, she had a gastroscopy, which did not reveal any pathological findings. The patient's pain was so intense that it brought her to tears. Because the GP was unable to help her, the patient asked her to call an ambulance, which she declined to do – she believed that the paramedics wouldn't take the patient due to 'lack of medical necessity' and that the doctor would therefore have to bear the costs of the service herself. This decision would be unimaginable for a *white* patient.

All these factors create the perfect basis for medical gaslighting: patients aren't believed to be ill. After all, why should you believe them over your own judgement, guided by 'facts'?

The consequences for victims of medical gaslighting are enormous: delayed diagnoses, self-doubt and a loss of trust in the healthcare system, which tend to lead to long-term avoidance of medical care. The medical trauma that arises as a result of repeated devaluation and ignorance by the medical system not only puts a strain on the psyche of those affected but also has physical effects: increased cortisol levels (stress hormone) leads to high blood pressure, diabetes and a weakened immune system, among other consequences⁵. Thus, medical gaslighting is a consequence of discrimination and racism and, at the same time, amplifies it.

What needs to change, and how can patients protect themselves?

The fight against medical gaslighting requires systemic changes. Political decision-makers and individual actors in the healthcare system must learn to understand their role in (racial) discrimination against patients. Awareness of the social aspects of health must be part of medical

expertise. Doctors and other healthcare professionals will only be able to professionalise their craft if they understand this and adapt their behaviour accordingly – which, in the spirit of the Geneva Declaration, should be the aspiration of all doctors.

Medical associations and educational and research institutions must integrate anti-racist and discrimination-sensitive approaches into medical training, research and teaching. Doctors should also ensure their offices are accessible, for example by using translation tools or providing chairs for fat people, allowing them to offer services with less discrimination.

The task of education ministries is to establish a school subject on health that enables students to learn about patient rights and how their bodies and the healthcare system work, enabling them to later become responsible, empowered patients.

To help themselves now, patients should prepare themselves before an appointment, research the (potential) illness and take a trusted person with them. Having a list of symptoms or questions can help structure the conversation. Platforms such as *queermed*, for example, provide support primarily with finding queer and trans-friendly, but also anti-racist, doctors. However, the real responsibility lies in changing the system so that patients no longer have to fight for their diagnoses.



Dr Sara Arewa

has a dream: equitable healthcare for all. Not only has she been working as a GP since 2021, but as a chronic mental health patient, she also knows the healthcare system from the other side. She has been an elected delegate of the Berlin Medical Association since 2023 and would like an anti-discrimination and anti-racism officer appointed there. On her Instagram channel *@menschlichemedizin*, she provides information on health policy issues, among other things.

Photo: private

⁵ Colin M.E. Halverson, Heather L. Penwell and Clair A. Francomano. 'Clinician-associated traumatization from difficult medical encounters: Results from a qualitative interview study on the Ehlers-Danlos syndromes'. *SSM Qualitative Research in Health* (2023): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2023.100237>

Too often overlooked: discrimination towards Roma and Sinti in the Austrian healthcare system

Anti-Roma and Sinti racism, the specific form of racism towards Roma and Sinti people, is a centuries-old social problem that Austria likes to ignore. Personally, I learnt early on that this is also reflected in the health of our ethnic group and our treatment in the healthcare system. As a young Romni, I've now gained insight into 'the other side' thanks to my training as a paramedic and a qualified carer, so I can regularly observe the constant discrimination – which is the most stressful part of my job.

In contrast to other European countries, there are no studies or surveys in Austria that provide evidence of the life expectancy of Roma and Sinti. There are generally few studies on the lived reality of Roma and Sinti in Austria, often because many are structurally denied access to academia. As a result, the only available data comes from neighbouring countries, which indicate that, on average, Roma and Sinti die five to ten years¹ earlier than the general EU population. But what's the cause?

Many members of the ethnic group still live in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances today and are regularly denied access to education. It was not so long ago that children had to attend special-needs schools even though they had no learning

disabilities^{2 3}. Even today, when training those doing their civilian service, they're surprised that I'm studying and have several qualifications at the age of 21 – and most surprised are those who are also part of my ethnic group. Societal representations of Roma and Sinti remain broadly stereotypical – for example, as musicians or unemployed beggars.

This discrimination makes accessing high-quality medical care and general health knowledge more difficult. What should you do if you get sick? How do you prevent illnesses? This information is hardly taught in Austria in the first place – and is even more challenging to acquire for groups such as Roma and Sinti, who are discriminated against in the education system.

On top of this is the frequent racist treatment by healthcare staff, doctors and nurses. As a *white-passing* Romni and a person working in the healthcare sector, I have many experiences to share.

1 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Roma in 10 European Countries – Main Results' (2021): https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results2_en.pdf

2 Polis aktuell, 'Soziale Ausgrenzung, Fokus: Roma in Österreich' (2010): <https://www.erinnern.at/media/440569440d-cdfea07b6f267e71a4d729/polis-nr-5-2010-roma-pdf/@download/file/Polis%20Nr.%205%20%202010%20Roma.pdf>

3 Unicef, 'Roma-Kinder in Europa' (2007): https://www.unicef.de/_cae/resource/blob/9412/179d119f221b7c27f-794b097e0a84058/i0092-roma-europa-2007-pdf-data.pdf&ved=2ahUKewjowuO_2piLAXhRfEDHcoNHHK4QF-noECBQQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1lOrnThw7kHr4JAhm2W1Tc

Content warning: racism Typical stereotypes that I hear: Roma and Sinti are 'untrustworthy'; they don't have good hygiene or an understanding of the German language. They're responsible for their illnesses or their lack of access to education. When on assignments, I regularly hear from colleagues: 'Now *they*' are acting like that again' when patients talk about their symptoms. And discriminatory statements like: 'It's another one of those who has 20 people visiting them all day.' Or: 'A fifth child at 23, imagine that – it can't go well.' The more often victims encounter these kinds of stereotypes, and racist comments and treatment become the norm for them, the less likely they are to use the healthcare system at all. **End of content warning**

Historically, there is another reason why Roma and Sinti are critical of the healthcare system. There was a doctor who brought chocolate to the children of our ethnic group in Auschwitz in the guise of a 'friendly uncle', only to abuse them for his cruel 'medical' experiments.

Almost 90 percent of the Roma and Sinti living in Austria in 1938 fell victim to the crimes of National Socialism – persecution and extermination that Austria hardly acknowledges. For Roma and Sinti, on the other hand, the consequences of the '*Porrajmos*' – the Romani term for the National Socialist genocide – are still deeply rooted today. According to the lesson of the past, *white* people can never be fully trusted.

Revealing their ancestry or being forced into doing something remains unthinkable for many; as such, the immunisation rates of Roma and Sinti people are low. Some also avoid routine medical check-ups.

Can you really blame them? My honest answer: No. After all, lacking healthcare access is not an individual problem. Anti-Roma and Sinti racism in the healthcare system is a reflection of deeply rooted and historically developed social discrimination.

Today, I look to my fellow students and hope that we can change the way we treat marginalised groups and make health education more accessible. In every interaction with colleagues and patients, I hope to change something about this racist system. And – last but not least – I try to persuade my loved ones to take up the offer of a medical check-up.



Pia Thomasberger

is the vice president of the Hochschule Österreichischer Roma und Romnja (HÖR) (Students' Union of Austrian Roma and Romnja). She is a trained paramedic and is currently studying to become a qualified carer.

Photo: HÖR

Health – for whom?

The psychosocial consequences of racism and the need for anti-racist services

‘Colonialism is one of humanity’s core wounds.’ – Jennifer Mullan

Experiencing racism can have profound consequences on biopsychosocial¹ health. But racism is constantly occurring even in areas that are supposed to provide healthcare, which can place an additional burden on BIPoC.

In conversation with Farah Saad and Parissima Taheri’s question ‘Psychosocial practice – for whom?’² and Rina Alluri’s article ‘Whose peace are we truly working towards?’, we want to begin directly with this question: healthcare – for whom?

Our healthcare system is geared towards a dominant culture. Many people, along different intersections (→ Intersectionality, Glossary, p. 71), benefit less from the same healthcare system and are even harmed by it. It’s striking that the term ‘healthy’ is often understood as the exact opposite of ‘unhealthy’ – anyone who doesn’t seem to fit into the narrow understanding of ‘health’ is quickly labelled as ‘unhealthy’.

Decolonial pioneers and psychosocial thinkers such as Jennifer Mullan³, adrienne maree brown, Cara Page and Erica Woodland⁴ therefore speak less of *diseases* and more of the social *dis-ease* that affects people.

Racism also occurs in places where people want to do ‘good’. The attitude that racism exists ‘there’ but ‘not with us’ or ‘in me’ can conceal deeply rooted structures. The healthcare system continuously reproduces all facets⁵ of racism, including structural and institutional effects. Practical and experiential knowledge, along with the theoretical knowledge bound to it, show that professionals in healthcare institutions – consciously or unconsciously – adopt an attitude of ignorance, denial or even a defensiveness that pretends to treat all people ‘equally’ or fairly.

Denying, ignoring, ‘dethematising’⁶ and trivialising racism, and having to navigate the challenges associated with it, can lead to physical, psychological and social exhaustion – also known as *racial battle fatigue*⁷ – for people who experience racial discrimination directly on their own bodies. This includes, among other things, the fact

¹ Biopsychosocial health describes the interplay of body, mind and social factors that, taken together, influence a person’s well-being and life quality.

² Farah Saad and Parissima Taheri, „Psychosoziale Praxis – Für wen?“, *Die Zeitgenossin* (2022).

³ Jennifer Mullan, „Decolonizing Therapy: Oppression, Historical Trauma, and Politicizing Your Practice“ (2023).

⁴ Cara Page and Erica Woodland, ‘Healing Justice Lineages: Dreaming at the Crossroads of Liberation, Collective Care, and Safety’ (2023).

⁵ Emilia Roig, „Emilia Roig: Why We Matter: Das Ende der Unterdrückung“ (2021).

⁶ Farah Saad, „Rassismus und biopsychosoziale Gesundheit. Zwischen (De)Thematisierung und widerständiger Praxis“, *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* (2021).

⁷ Racial battle fatigue refers to psychophysiological symptoms associated with persistent stress resulting from racial discrimination. These symptoms include fatigue, exhaustion, high blood pressure and anxiety disorders.

that people who draw attention to racist and intersectional discriminatory practices in their work environment or in other group settings, for example, are often construed as 'trouble makers' by the people in that environment. These reactions force people into a dilemma – either to remain silent or to actively resist these systems. Both options can have serious consequences for their physical health, their mental state and their social environment.

Racism can also be traumatic – this is often referred to as *race-based trauma*⁸ and is linked to *colonial trauma*⁹. When people react to racism with different forms of *coping* or survival methods – such as hypervigilance, emotional withdrawal or social isolation – this is often dismissed as a 'personal matter'. Some of these strategies or even a range of (bio)psychosocial reactions are also frequently pathologised, i.e. presented as 'deviant' or even as a mental 'disorder'. This can lead to specialists not taking people seriously or even failing to give them the correct psychosocial or medical treatment. Instead, we need a better understanding of how racism affects our well-being and changes at a systemic level to dismantle the burdensome systems that create and trigger certain reactions.

What's missing – and what's needed

Despite the impacts of racism on health, there is still a lack of psychosocial and medical services that are anti-racist and anti-discrimination as well as intersectional and trauma-informed. Many people report that professionals ignore or trivialise their complaints and experience racist treatment and behaviour. These experiences can sometimes lead to people avoiding medical care or psychosocial support, which often prevents early treatment.

There is also a lack of services that focus on BIPOC perspectives. 'Traditional', Western and Eurocentric psychotherapy and its corresponding educational forms hardly or entirely fails to address the experience of racism, which permeates all areas of life and how it is navigated. It's common for patients to encounter therapists that trivialise their descriptions of racist experiences. When these factors are not taken into account, many therapeutic approaches remain ineffective or even lead to further damage.

Moving towards healing justice

One of many essential steps towards anti-racist, intersectional and trauma-informed mental healthcare is the intentional creation of *safer spaces* for BIPOC. Such spaces make it possible to reflect on stressful social structures and dynamics, process experiences, develop strategies and tools together, and create and experience spaces for collective and individual care. Bringing together people with similar experiences has a fortifying effect.

Changing structures so that people have space for their own processes and collective well-being is the idea behind the concept of '*healing justice*', which emerged from the work of BIPOC activists and medical professionals.

Decision-makers and professionals have a profound responsibility to actively challenge and dismantle all levels of racism. Having 'good' intentions is not enough. Implementing effective measures is crucial to creating a fairer healthcare system.



Wir sind auch Wien (WsaW)

advocates for BIPOC-centred psychosocial and increasingly intersectional and trauma-informed services in Vienna and beyond. WsaW creates spaces for self-care, community care and psychosocial praxis. With workshops, training and coaching sessions, the WsaW team supports psychosocial and educational professionals in critically reflecting on their own practise.

Photo: Abiona Esther Ojo

8 et al. Prentis Hemphill (2021), Robert Carter (2007), Resmaa Menakem (2017), Shawna Murray-Browne (2020)

9 Grada Kilomba, 'Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism' (2016)

‘Decolonization is unsettling.’**– Jennifer Mullan**

Training, (further) education and intentionally implemented health and social service processes are essential to promote anti-racist skills among professionals. Professionals can reflect on their own practice and observe their defence mechanisms in order to deal with them and develop an approach that takes the experiences and needs of BIPoC seriously.

Facilitating more BIPoC-centred spaces, as well as *healing justice*¹⁰ and a justice-oriented transformation is liberatory for all. Why is it important to keep this in mind? We find it essential that people who have a set of privileges in this racist system consciously develop skills to contribute to reducing racist harms – without acting from a self-righteous ‘saviour’ position (keyword: *saviorism*), which can go hand in hand with paternalism. We cannot emphasise enough how urgent it is to train people with a set of privileges within the framework of biopsychosocial education to reflect on their positionality, to consciously act in a way that is anti-racist and acknowledges intersectional discrimination and to take responsibility for their misconduct and its consequences (keyword: *accountability*).

There is an urgent need for more services that consider a wide range of lived realities. A fair(er) healthcare system can handle all people’s needs transparently, reflexively and consciously. These violent dynamics have existed for centuries. Like so many who came before us, who have strengthened us and accompanied us on our journey, we, the authors of this text, repeat: change cannot wait!

¹⁰ et al. Mia Mingus (2021), Mariame Kaba & Shira Hassan (2021)



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EIN HERZ FÜR ALLE

Rassismus verletzt die Würde und Gleichheit jedes Menschen und spaltet unsere Gesellschaft. Deshalb ist es wichtig, dass wir alle gemeinsam ein klares Zeichen gegen Diskriminierung und Intoleranz setzen. Die Landstraße, ein offizieller Menschenrechtsbezirk, steht für Vielfalt und Pluralismus. Wir sehen unsere Aufgabe darin, ein respektvolles Miteinander zu fördern und Vorurteile aktiv abzubauen.

Jeder Mensch verdient es, ohne Angst vor Diskriminierung oder Ausgrenzung zu leben. Damit das möglich wird, tragen wir alle Verantwortung: Ob im persönlichen Umfeld, in der Nachbarschaft oder im öffentlichen Raum – jede kleine Handlung, die für Toleranz und Respekt einsteht, macht einen Unterschied. Gemeinsam können wir eine gerechtere Welt schaffen, in der alle Menschen dieselben Chancen und Rechte genießen.

Als Bezirksvorsteher der Landstraße liegt mir dieses Thema besonders am Herzen. Wenn Sie Diskriminierung oder Rassismus erleben oder beobachten, zögern Sie nicht, mich direkt anzusprechen. Ihr Anliegen ist mir wichtig, und ich bin gerne bereit, Ihnen zuzuhören und Unterstützung zu bieten. Lassen Sie uns gemeinsam dafür sorgen, dass unsere Gesellschaft eine bleibt, in der alle Menschen mit Respekt und Würde behandelt werden.

Ihr
Erich Hohenberger
Bezirksvorsteher

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UNSERE WERTE FÜR EIN GUTES ZUSAMMENLEBEN
IN WIEN.**

Power Backpack: Exercises to feel better

Sometimes people feel bad and don't know why.
Trauma can be the reason why.

Trauma can result from bad experiences.

Bad experiences can have long-lasting effects.
You feel bad all of a sudden.
Even though nothing has happened.

For example:

- A very bad accident
- Beating or hitting
- Sexual abuse in childhood or as a teenager
- Rape
- War experiences
- Verbal abuse, insults or being left out

These exercises can help you feel better.

Body exercises: the colour

Sit or lay down.
You can also stand.
You should feel comfortable and safe.
Your upper body should be straight.
You can close your eyes.

Imagine your favourite
colour in your belly.
Every time you breathe in, the colour gets more space.
As you breathe out, all your troubles
flow out of you.

Thought exercises: protective cover

Imagine a protective cover.
The protective cover is for your whole body.
What does it look like?
What is it made of?
What colour is it?
Is it as transparent as a veil?

Think about how
you can take this protection with you.
Maybe you can make it very small.
That way it can fit nicely in your trouser pocket.
When you need help,
the protective cover is right there.





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Books to support children and start meaningful discussions

'You can always find the greatest treasures between the covers of a book' – Lenny Löwenstern

With these words in mind, we'd like to inspire children's imaginations with our reading tips and show good ways to have conversations about racism, discrimination

and empowerment with children and young people. We've therefore put together a selection of books...

... which show the children in all their diversity.

-  Komm, wir zeigen dir unsere Kita (Constanze von Kitzing, 2021)
-  Es ist Platz für mich da! (Mariela Georg, 2022)
-  Alle machen Sport (Anna Horak, 2023)
-  JOKES! Club: Jekh, Dui, Drin - 3 Freundinnen in Berlin (Tayo Awosusi-Onutor, 2023)
-  So schlafe ich! Und wie schläfst du? (Olaolu Fajembola/ Tebogo Nimindé-Dundadengar, 2023)
-  Guten Morgen, schöner Tag! Elisabeth Steinkellner, 2024 - multilingual edition)
-  The Secret Explorers and the Plant Poachers (S. J. King, 2024)
-  Gute Nachrichten aus aller Welt: Von Sudan bis Afghanistan (Minitta Kandlbauer/ Melanie Kandlbauer/Yani Hamdy, 2024)

... which help you talk to children and young people about racism, discrimination and empowerment.

-  Wie erkläre ich Kindern Rassismus?: Rassismussensible Begleitung und Empowerment von klein auf (Josephine Apraku, 2021)
-  Steck mal in meiner Haut! Antirassismus, Aufklärung und Empowerment – Mit Tipps für Eltern und Pädagog*innen (Saskia Hödl/ Pia Amofa-Antwi, 2022)
-  Empowerment als Erziehungsaufgabe: Praktisches Wissen für den Umgang mit Rassismuserfahrungen (Nkechi Madubuko, 2024)
-  Erstes Aufklappen und Verstehen: Was ist Rassismus? (Katie Daynes/Jordan Akpojar, Neuauflage 2024)
-  Es ist doch nur Haut (Nina Jablonski/ Holly Y. McGee, 2024)
-  Mit Kindern über Diskriminierungen sprechen (Olaolu Fajembola/Tebogo Nimindé-Dundadengar, 2024)



You can find more information on ZARA Training's services here:



Spheres of life 2024

Definitions and terms

The following chapters contain anonymised case reports of racist incidents from all spheres of life.

Internet

Incidents that took place on the internet. This category includes online media, websites, on-line forums, social media and video platforms. (→ Internet, p. 32)

Public sphere

Incidents that took place in public, commonly accessible places, such as on the street, traffic areas, in parks or on public transport. Racist graffiti is also included in this chapter, as majority of instances of racist graffiti reported to ZARA took place in the public sphere. (→ Public sphere, p. 35)

Goods and services (incl. living and neighbourhood)

Incidents related to the access to, and supply of, goods and services (such as in venues, stores and by other service providers). (→ Goods and services, p. 40)

Public authorities and institutions

Incidents involving administrative bodies, educational institutions and other municipal institutions (police excluded). (→ Public authorities and institutions, p. 46)

Politics and media

Incidents that were provoked or spread by politicians, political parties or traditional media (print, radio and television) both online and offline. (→ Politics and media, p. 49)

Police

Incidents related to security administration and public safety bodies. (→ Police, p. 52)

The systematic documentation of racist incidents makes them more visible and has therefore been very important to ZARA from the outset. Among other things, it shows that there is a need for action. At ZARA, people who have experienced racist incidents receive competent legal and psychosocial support. The interests and concerns of the people who contact the ZARA Counselling Centre are our first priority. Their statements are met with trust and understanding, and they are taken seriously. We constantly see that the experiences of people who are directly and systematically disadvantaged by racism are all too often ignored or simply denied, due to the social structures and power relations created and maintained by racism. ZARA wants to counteract this.

At the same time, ZARA counsellors endeavour to enter into dialogue with the 'opposing party', as long as they have the relevant information and

the client's consent. It is not possible for ZARA to obtain all relevant information from all parties involved. We do not see that as our duty, as our work centres those directly affected. Our focus is on the perspectives and realities of those affected by racism. Reports or statements from clients that seem clearly contradictory or implausible are not reproduced in the Racism Report.

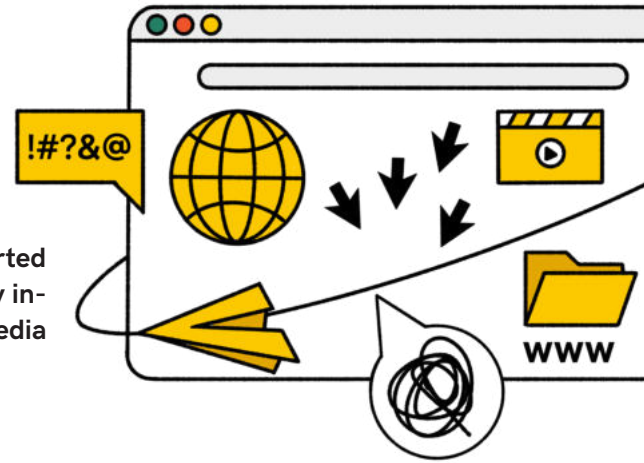
Through publishing case reports of racist incidents, ZARA is placed in the middle of an anti-racist dilemma, where it sometimes appears necessary to reproduce forms of racism and racist language in order to make racism more visible, and therefore counter it.

What does ZARA do?

-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief interventions, strengthening interventions and support
-  Reporting to the police/the public prosecutor's office/the NS reporting office
-  Exchange/coordination with partner organisations, lawyers, authorities or other relevant parties
-  Drafting of complaints, appeals, statements, applications and letters of intervention
-  Accompaniment (e.g. to court hearings, arbitration meetings, the authorities or police interrogations)
-  Referral to other organisations, counselling centres and doctors (to obtain medical reports)
-  Requests to delete hate posts on social media platforms (both as a normal user and as a 'Trusted Partner')
-  Requests to move graffiti in public spaces
-  Awareness-raising/public relations work
-  Inspection of records
-  Documentation

Internet



This chapter offers a selection of the 1,009 cases reported to ZARA that took place on the internet. This category includes online media, websites, online forums, social media and video platforms.



1 Online articles inciting hostility towards refugees

ZARA received an anonymous report that drew attention to two newspaper articles about flats for people entitled to asylum. In them, they are falsely labelled as 'refugees'. The articles provoke antipathy towards refugees – before they even move into flats. People who are still in the asylum process, in contrast to those entitled to asylum, do not yet have access to the labour market. The articles therefore give readers the impression that the people in question are not yet allowed to work and that the flats have to be financed by taxpayers. However, in reality, the rent is paid by the residents themselves, as they are people entitled to asylum and therefore have access to the labour market. Although this fact is eventually mentioned in the article, it's only made clear through indirect quotes from project managers. A ZARA counsellor wrote a letter of intervention to the Press Council (→ Glossary, p. 71). The Press Council responded that one of the articles in question had already been dealt with by the Press Council but that they saw no reason to initiate proceedings in the matter. The second article was submitted to the Senate for review.



What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  Drafting of a letter of intervention

2 Racist statements towards Roma and Sinti in a YouTube video

The representative of an association for Rom*nja and Sinti*zze contacted ZARA because he stumbled across a video on the Vorarlberg state election online in which passers-by were asked about the election. In it, they made racist statements towards Roma and Sinti. The reporter wanted to know whether this constituted incitement to hatred (→ Glossary, p. 72) within the meaning of the Criminal Code. A ZARA counsellor watched the video and made a legal assessment of the statements, and concluded that although the statements made by the passers-by were sensationalistic and likely to engender hostility towards Roma and Sinti, they did not clearly constitute incitement to hatred. However, as legal opinions differ, the counsellor nevertheless advised the association to press charges. Additionally, she offered to write a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) to the channel that published the video to have it removed. Ultimately, the association decided to press charges with the public prosecutor's office and await the outcome before taking any further steps.



What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling

3 Racist insults sent by email

R. is a German citizen. She regularly commutes from Germany to Austria because her partner lives here. One day, she received an insulting email from one of her partner's work colleagues. In the email, the employee used racial slurs and made inflammatory statements. Similar emails were also sent to other people, including R.'s partner. R. went to the police to press charges. However, the police believed that the offence of insult (→ Glossary, p. 69) was not met according to the Austrian Criminal Code, as the insult did not occur in public. R. therefore turned to ZARA. A ZARA counsellor asked her to send screenshots so that she could document them and make a legal assessment. The counsellor also concluded that the private email did not constitute the legal offence of insult, as this must be made in front of at least three bystanders in order to be punishable. However, the counsellor pointed out to R. that the offences of cyberstalking or cyberbullying (→ Glossary, p. 69) could potentially be met if the perpetrator sent insulting emails to several people and it was clear that R. was meant. She therefore advised her to document any other insulting emails or messages from the perpetrator. Even if there was no option for legal action at the moment, the counsellor encouraged R. to contact ZARA or the police again if further incidents occurred. She also advised blocking the perpetrator to prevent direct contact and avoid further distress.





What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling

4 Anti-Semitic threats on Instagram

One day, L. received disturbing private messages on Instagram. These messages were full of anti-Semitic insults and serious threats. The messages were written in different languages and sent from a fake account. The situation was very distressing for L., in particular because he has a Jewish heritage. He therefore turned to ZARA and requested counselling. A ZARA counsellor legally assessed the facts of the case and advised L. to file a complaint with the police for the offence of a dangerous threat (→ Glossary, p. 70). The counsellor also informed him of the option for free trial support (→ Glossary, p. 71) provided by ZARA. After L. filed a complaint, he approached ZARA once more to discuss further steps relating to the pending criminal proceedings. The counsellor continued to provide support for this process.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Accompaniment (in the form of psychosocial trial support)



Discrimination by association: people can also be discriminated against and treated poorly because they have a (presumed) close relationship with a person who has a protected characteristic. This is part of structural racism.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking incitement to hatred as an example

Hate comments that meet the criteria for certain criminal offences and thus cross the line of freedom of expression can lead to fines or even imprisonment ((e.g. incitement to hatred, insult, dangerous threat, cyberbullying or cyberstalking (→ Glossary, p. 71)).

What is incitement to hatred?

Incitement to hatred is publicly inciting violence against one or several people because of their (assumed) affiliation with a group, in a way that makes it accessible to a large number of people (approximately 30 or more). It also includes stirring up hatred against these people or insulting them in a certain derogatory and degrading way.

These groups are defined, for example, by skin colour, language, religion or belief, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender.

On the internet, it is illegal to write content that qualifies as incitement to hatred oneself (e.g. a post on a social media platform) as well as to distribute (e.g. share) such content.

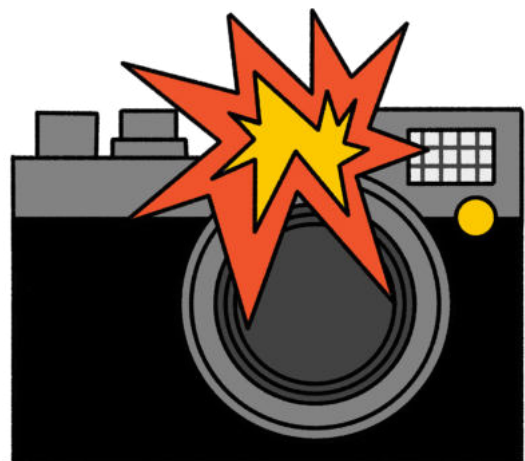
Perpetrators can be punished under Austrian law if the offence occurred in Austria (or on a server in Austria) or if the result of the offence should occur in Austria.

How can I take action against incitement to hatred and how can ZARA help?

If you read a post and feel that it could constitute incitement to hatred, report it to ZARA. ZARA will then check whether it qualifies as incitement to hatred – and can also help with further steps, for example, reporting the post to the police or the public prosecutor's office. Furthermore, if you report a post that falls under criminal law to the relevant social media platform, they are required to delete it. ZARA can also take over the process of contacting the platform to ensure its deletion. If ZARA requests a deletion, it's more likely that the post will actually be removed because ZARA has a special status on many social media platforms ('Trusted Partner Status' → Glossary, p. 72).

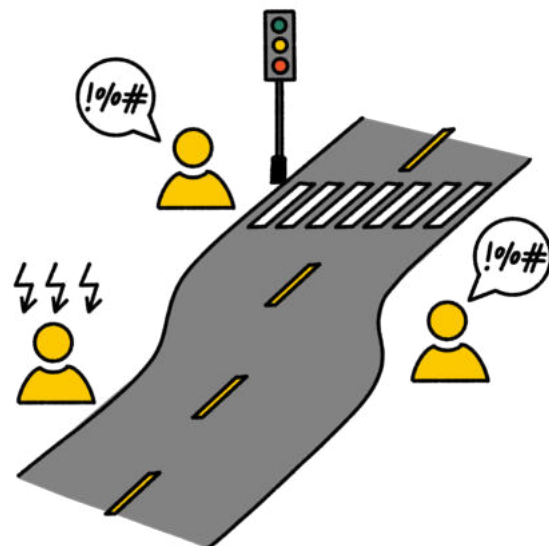
Since 2021, ZARA has also been able to accompany and support victims of incitement to hatred online – together with lawyers – free of charge in court proceedings (Trial support → Glossary, p. 71). ZARA works to ensure that a suitable lawyer is found.

→ **Tip:** For a report or criminal complaint, it's important to take a screenshot of the relevant post. The screenshot must include the date, time and context of the post.



Public sphere





This chapter offers a selection of the 245 cases reported to ZARA that took place in the public sphere. The public sphere includes all incidents that take place in public and publicly accessible places, such as streets, traffic areas, parks and by means of public transport. Racist graffiti is also included in this chapter, as the majority of the 51 instances of racist graffiti reported to ZARA took place in the public sphere.



5 Kicked off a bus due to racism

After a long day at work, T. boarded a bus with his photo lamps in tow. At the next stop, the bus driver suddenly shouted at him that he had to get off the bus. T. asked him if it was because of the photo lamps, but the bus driver said no. He then asked him if it was because of his skin colour, to which the driver said nothing. Instead, he insisted that T. get off the bus; otherwise, he would call the police. However, T. calmly remained seated and waited. The bus driver then got up and went to where T. was sitting. T. got angry and reiterated that the bus driver's request was racist. The police arrived shortly afterwards. The officers told T. that he must get off if he was told to do so by the bus driver. T. and another person who wanted to stay and support him got off the bus. Shortly afterwards, the next bus arrived and the officers explained the situation to the new driver. The driver was surprised and stated that T. could of course ride the bus and that transporting photo lamps on the bus was permitted. A few months later, T. received a fine of 165 euros for 'disturbing public order'. R. therefore turned to ZARA, where a counsellor supported him in drafting an appeal against the decision. She will also continue providing support during the trial.






What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of complaints and appeals

6 Assault at a public viewing

After attending a football match public viewing, P. was sitting outside with his friends for a while when a man attacked him. The man was drunk and smashed the beer bottle he was holding over P.'s head while shouting xenophobic statements. The attack caused P. to suffer two cuts to his face, including a five-millimetre wound near his eye. After this incident, P. reached out to ZARA, where he had a counselling session and received support with police communications. During the phone call with the police, it became apparent that the evidence presented was insufficient to find the perpetrator. However, the police requested that P. take a photo of the perpetrator in case he came across him again. In case criminal proceedings would occur, ZARA referred him to the victim protection organisation WEISSER RING.




What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Exchange/coordination with partner organisations, lawyers, authorities or other relevant parties
-  Referral to a counselling centre (WEISSER RING)

7 Use of the N-word and threats on the street

K., M. and their friends were taking part in a vigil for Palestinians in the first district of Vienna. Three men were standing near them. Suddenly, one of the men said to K., who was wearing a kufiyah, 'F*** Palestine'. He then insulted the friends and threatened to rape them. Another insult he said was, 'F***ing N* b*tch'. When the perpetrators attempted to leave, the friends followed them and called the police. M. followed the main perpetrator, who eventually fled into a dark area. M. then broke off the pursuit as she felt unsafe. When the police finally arrived on the scene, the friends described what happened and handed over the videos they had made along with their IDs and contact details. The male police officers showed little interest in the incident and did not classify the rape threat as serious. K. then published one of the videos on Instagram, whereupon she received information about the perpetrator's companions from two people. However, the primary perpetrator remained unidentified. R. therefore turned to ZARA. A counsellor informed them of the offences of insult (→ Glossary, p. 69) and dangerous threat (→ Glossary, p. 70). She also told K. that there were risks to publishing the video on Instagram, as this could result in a retaliatory charge against her. The counselling centre offered to accompany K. and her friends to the police and informed them about the option to file an anonymous complaint.





What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention

8 Reversal of victim and offender after a public assault

M. was walking on the pavement with her two small children as a woman with a very large dog on a lead was walking towards them. The dog jumped at another pedestrian, which frightened M., but she continued walking with her children and passed the woman. Because M. was afraid that she might also be attacked by the dog and wanted to have proof of this if necessary, she started inconspicuously filming to be safe. The dog's owner noticed this and began insulting and attacking M. She grabbed M.'s arm and attempted to rip off her headscarf, then slapped M.'s phone from her hand. Out of self-defence and in the hope that the perpetrator would let go of her, M. bit the attacker's arm. Many passers-by gathered and attempted to de-escalate the situation and help M. However, the perpetrator continued holding onto M. and refused to let go. Eventually, the police were called. The perpetrator got their ear first and misrepresented the situation to the officers. She then joked with the police officers, stating that she would now need a vaccination. After the incident, M. was charged with assault and dangerous threats (→ Glossary, p. 70), for which she reached out to ZARA. A ZARA counsellor met with her and accompanied her to the police to file a charge against the attacker. M. received legal assistance through her husband's legal insurance. She requested a settlement through the NEUSTART organisation, but the perpetrator insisted on a court hearing. ZARA will continue to support M.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Accompaniment for the filing of a police report

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racist insults as an example

Insults¹ (→ Glossary, p. 69) in the legal sense are insults, taunts, physical abuse (below the threshold of bodily injury) or threats of physical abuse that occur in front of at least three people (not including the victim and the perpetrator). Insults can be punished by the court with a prison sentence of up to three months or a fine.

An administrative penalty may also be imposed for offences that are not committed in front of at least three people. Such insults may violate the prohibition of discrimination under administrative criminal law in accordance with the EGVG (→ Glossary, p. 70) or corresponding state laws.

A racist insult ('Qualified insult' → Glossary p. 71) is an insult that refers to, for example, the skin colour, ethnic origin or religion of the person insulted. For example, calling someone a racist name, tearing off someone's headscarf, slapping someone in the face because of their religion, spitting at and mocking someone because of their origin or insulting someone on the internet because of the colour of their skin is considered a racist insult.

How can I take action against racist insults?

Racist insults are prohibited by law, and in contrast to simple insults (i.e. insults without a prejudicial motive → Glossary, p. 70), can be reported to the police if the insult is likely to cause contempt or disparagement of the injured person in the eyes of the public. For example, insults such as 'fucking [ethnic/religious/racial group]' would fulfil this criteria.

It is necessary for the person affected to also authorise the initiation of criminal proceedings when making the report. After that, the public prosecutor's office is responsible for conducting the proceedings. There is no cost risk for the victim.

Offences that violate the EGVG or relevant state laws can be reported to the district administrative authorities or the police.

How can ZARA help?

If you have been on the receiving end of racial insults, you can reach out to ZARA. ZARA can offer you support and determine whether there is an insult in the legal sense. If necessary, ZARA can support a complaint and give procedural advice. One issue when it comes to assaults in the public sphere is that the perpetrators are often unknown and therefore cannot be tracked down. Nevertheless, reporting unknown perpetrators to the public prosecutor's office is important because that is the only way to ensure such incidents become known and appear in official statistics. Studies show that online insults are practically never reported; consequently, the number of unrecorded cases is enormous.



¹ § 115 Austrian Criminal Code

Racist graffiti

9 Racist graffiti in a public toilet

M. was at a park in Vienna. While using the public toilet there, she discovered racist graffiti – hateful statements directed towards Muslim people. M. also noticed other graffiti disparaging people on the basis of their ethnicity. She took photographs of the graffiti and sent them to ZARA using the anonymous report form. The graffiti was documented by ZARA and reported to the City of Vienna. The municipal authority arranged for the graffiti to be removed.



What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  Request to remove graffiti to the City of Vienna

10 NS graffiti on an election poster

Because a legislative election was coming up, many election posters were visible on the streets. J. was walking in the city when he noticed a poster with the face of a leading politician printed on it – which someone had defaced with National Socialist symbols, including by drawing a swastika. J., dismayed by the graffiti, photographed it. After some time, the symbols on the poster were gone because someone painted over them. Nevertheless, J. wanted to report the incident and contacted ZARA. ZARA documented the graffiti and reported it to the NS Reporting Office.




What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  Report to the NS Reporting Office

11 Right-wing extremist stickers on memorial plaque

There is a memorial plaque for former Jewish pupils in front of a school in Lower Austria. One day, F. noticed stickers from a right-wing extremist group on the memorial. F. was outraged and contacted the local authorities, which led to the stickers being removed. However, F. wanted greater consequences for anti-Semitic actions. He therefore contacted the police, but they did not pursue the case further. Finally, F. reported the incident to ZARA and received counselling. ZARA also forwarded the incident to the NS Reporting Office.



What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Report to the NS Reporting Office

12 Residential building defaced with the N-word

Z. was in Vienna and discovered racist graffiti – the N-word had been sprayed on the wall of a building. The large graffiti was visible to all passers-by. Z., believing that such graffiti has no place in public spaces, contacted ZARA. ZARA documented the incident and reported the graffiti to the City of Vienna. The city contacted the responsible property management to have the graffiti removed.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  Request to remove graffiti to the City of Vienna

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racist graffiti as an example

Graffiti can be subject to many different standards. Of particular legal importance are the following laws: the Prohibition Act (→ Glossary, p. 72), the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts¹ (EGVG → Glossary, p. 70), the Symbols Act (→ Glossary, p. 72) and the Austrian Criminal Code. Depending on the applicable law, the penalty can be a fine of up to 10,000 euros (in repeated cases, up to 20,000 euros or six weeks imprisonment per the EGVG) or imprisonment of up to 20 years (Prohibition Act). For graffiti with swastikas, SS runes or National Socialist slogans in public spaces, the Prohibition Act and the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts are especially relevant. The Symbols Act also prohibits certain other symbols (including Grey Wolves, Ustaša and ISIS, among others). In this case, a fine of up to 4,000 euros and a prison sentence of up to one month (in repeat cases up to 10,000 euros) is possible.

When is graffiti legally considered damage to property?

Apart from the Symbols Act and Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts, graffiti can also constitute damage to property. Damage to property² occurs when a 'foreign' object is destroyed, damaged, defaced or rendered otherwise unusable. The damage/defacement must be so significant that it can only be removed with a certain amount of effort.

→ **Warning:** Independently painting or pasting over (racist) graffiti can also constitute damage to property.

In the case of simple property damage, a sentence of up to six months (or alternatively a fine) may be imposed. According to Article 126 of the Austrian Criminal Code, the prison

sentence can be up to two years in the case of serious damage to property – for example, if a grave or protected object is defaced. If the damage incurred exceeds 300,000 euros, the offender faces a prison sentence of up to five years. In the case of messages that are explicitly racist or constitute incitement to hatred (→ Glossary, p. 72), this can lead to higher punishments for perpetrators as a special aggravating circumstance.

How can I take action against (racist) graffiti?

Graffiti – if it constitutes damage to property – is considered an 'offence prosecuted ex officio' (→ Glossary, p. 71). This means that as soon as a law enforcement authority becomes aware of it, they are obliged to initiate criminal investigations. In principle, anyone can report graffiti to the police or the public prosecutor's office (→ Glossary, p. 72) by means of an exposition of the facts (→ Glossary, p. 72). Even if the perpetrators can no longer be found, such a report serves as a statistical record.

→ **Tip:** When making a report, it is important to give as much information as possible about the content and location of the graffiti, and ideally to include a photo of the graffiti.

How can ZARA help?

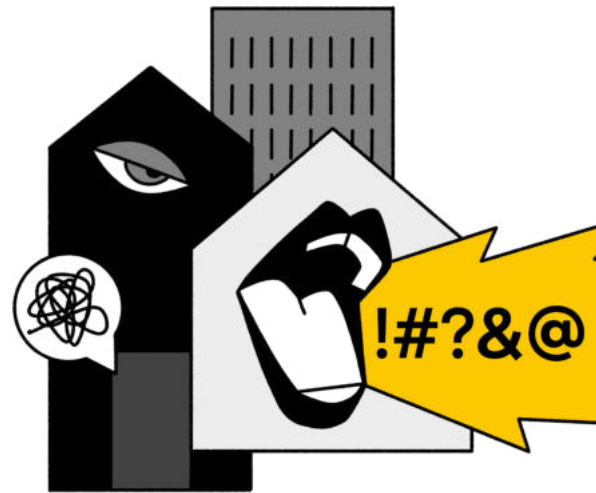
Racist graffiti can be reported to ZARA. ZARA documents and reports it to the relevant authority. ZARA works in cooperation with the relevant contact points to very often (quickly) remove the graffiti, especially in public spaces.

¹ Art. III para. 1 line 4 EGVG

² § 125 Austrian Criminal Code

Goods and services

This chapter includes a selection of the 178 cases reported to ZARA in connection with goods and services (including living and neighbourhood). It documents incidents related to the access to, and supply of, goods and services (such as in venues, stores and other service providers).







Living and neighbourhood

13 Chants for foreigners to leave from a pub

R. was living with her husband in a village about 100 metres from a pub. During a party at the pub in the middle of the night, guests loudly chanted 'Foreigners out!' to the tune of Gigi D'Agostino's song 'L'amour toujours'. The guests also shouted other xenophobic statements. The couple reported the incident to the police and also presented video evidence. Proceedings were initiated, but the trial stalled because it was claimed that the video was fake. An investigation was launched into the couple who reported the incident, whereupon the authenticity of the video needed to be proven by means of an expensive expert report. After the incident, the couple faced hostility from the village community – probably because it was not the first incident that the couple had reported to the police about the pub. However, rather than protecting the couple, the police also made racist remarks to them. R. therefore reached out to ZARA. A counsellor informed the couple about their legal options, while ZARA also supported the couple in making the matter public.







What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Public relations work


14 Racist insults in a postbox

For months, a neighbour was clogging up T.'s postbox with rubbish containing countless racist insults. One day, T. caught him in the act and reported him to the nearest police station, but the charges were dropped. T. therefore turned to ZARA for legal advice. A counsellor accompanied T. to the police, where a person specially trained in violent crimes and hate crimes (→ Glossary, p. 70) took the report and carried out the interview. Charges were filed for the racist insults (→ Glossary, p. 69) and property damage. In the meantime, the same racist insults were smeared on T.'s garage wall, rubbish was thrown into the postbox again, and her key-hole was glued shut. ZARA supported T. in her communications with the social housing centre. Ultimately, the perpetrator moved out and T. could finally live in peace.

What did ZARA do?





-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of a letter of intervention
-  Accompaniment for the filing of a police report
-  Accompaniment to a police interview

15 Racially motivated assault by a neighbour



K. and his fiancée were living in a social housing unit. A plumber who operated his business below their flat regularly harassed (→ Glossary, p. 69) the couple, including making racist remarks, knocking on their flat door at night and blocking the garage entrance with his incorrectly parked company vehicles. K. confronted the plumber about the parking violations, whereupon the plumber hit him. K. proceeded to report the plumber for assault. He reached out to the police repeatedly, but the situation did not improve in the long term. Despite complaints to the property management, which 14 other tenants supported, the property management failed to respond. K. turned to Wiener Wohnen and applied for a new flat, submitting the necessary documents (confirmation of complaint, hospital documents), but Wiener Wohnen refused to provide one. The couple, feeling very stressed by the ongoing harassment and assaults, moved into his fiancée's father's flat. K. therefore turned to ZARA. A counsellor conducted a relief intervention with K. and discussed the option of waiting for the Housing Commission's (MA50) decision before taking any steps. After being turned down by MA50, the counsellor recommended that K. contact wohnpartner Wien, an organisation specialising in conflict resolution. The counsellor offered to compose a written statement in the event of a future application.






What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Accompaniment for the filing of a police report
-  Referral to another counselling centre

16 Racist neighbour harasses a family

R. was living with her two children in a flat owned by Wiener Wohnen. For the past two years, she'd had repeated racist incidents with a neighbour. For example, R. was hit by the neighbour while waiting for the lift. She reported the incident to the police, but they dropped the case because there were no witnesses or evidence. In another incident, the neighbour harassed R. by making sexual innuendos. He also harassed her children, for example by following them, filming them on his mobile phone, shouting at them or claiming that they stole something from him. The children were so frightened by this that they would no longer dare to walk around the housing complex on their own. The neighbour also threatened the children by saying that their mother would be taken by the police and locked up. R. tried reaching out to wohnpartner Wien, but this was unsuccessful because the neighbour did not respond to the mediation attempts. A women's counselling centre referred R. to ZARA. ZARA established contact with wohnpartner Wien in order to provide support and drew up a statement to request a flat change through Wiener Wohnen. For the threats and harassment (→ Glossary, p. 69), ZARA referred the family to the child protection organisation möwe and WEISSER RING. There was also the option of reaching out to the neighbourhood police, who could make contact with the neighbour.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Accompaniment to wohnpartner Wien
-  Referral to another counselling centre

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racial discrimination in housing as an example

The Equal Treatment Act (→ Glossary, p. 70) prohibits discrimination against people on the basis of certain characteristics – for example, their ethnicity – in the access to and provision of housing. This means, for example, that racial discrimination or insults are forbidden when renting out flats.

Discrimination in housing adverts is also forbidden – for example, through statements such as ‘only for citizens’ or ‘native language German required’.

How can I take action against racial discrimination in the housing market?

Those who experience racial discrimination or harassment (→ Glossary, p. 69) when accessing housing have several options available to them.

They can have the Equal Treatment Commission (→ Glossary, p. 70) examine through legal proceedings whether discrimination on the basis of ethnicity has occurred. These proceedings are free of charge. However, if discrimination is found, this decision is not compulsorily enforceable.

Additionally, if the Equal Treatment Act has been violated, those affected can also file a complaint with a civil court. For example, damages can be claimed. However, such civil court proceedings are associated with a not inconsiderable cost risk.

Discriminatory housing advertisements can be reported to the district administrative authority by those who are interested in the property (or by the Ombud for Equal Treatment → Glossary, p. 70).

How can ZARA help?

As a first step, ZARA can clarify whether a violation of the Equal Treatment Act is likely to have taken place. Together with the person affected, ZARA can consider whether extrajudicial steps are possible and determine which are desirable. For example, ZARA can offer support through a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) or accompaniment to a mediation. If those affected request legal action, ZARA can establish contact with the Ombud for Equal Treatment so that they can offer support in proceedings before the Equal Treatment Commission.

ZARA can refer certain cases of discrimination to the Litigation Association of NGOs Against Discrimination. If the Litigation Association decides to take on the case, it will then represent the person affected in the court proceedings and supports them in asserting their claims under the Equal Treatment Act. The Litigation Association then also assumes the cost risk of the proceedings.






Retail, gastronomy and other commercial services



17 Cancer patient experiences medical gaslighting

H. had been suffering from pain around one kidney for some time, so she went to the hospital for an examination. She was given medication and referred to her family doctor, who then told her that no further examinations were necessary. Despite the indication of tissue changes, her GP dismissed the idea that it could be a tumour from the beginning. H. then began visiting her GP regularly because she feared that the tissue changes were increasing. Although H. informed her doctor about her worsening condition, he repeatedly brushed her off. Over time, it became clear to H. that the doctor was not taking her seriously because of her ethnicity. After some time, H. also began feeling pain near her other kidney, leading her GP to refer her to the hospital. At the hospital, they discovered that she actually had a tumour, which had now grown larger – H. had cancer. Because the cancer was already advanced, she needed to have a kidney removed. H. wanted to take action against her GP because of this. She contacted a neighbourhood centre, which put her in touch with ZARA. H. received counselling and was informed about her rights. ZARA contacted the Wiener Pflege- und Patient*innenanwaltschaft (Vienna Patient Advocacy Office) for H. to discuss a possible case referral and prepared a statement of facts (→ Glossary, p. 72) together with the neighbourhood centre's employees.




What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Exchange with partner organisations
-  Referral to another counselling centre

18 Racist treatment in therapy

K. was working in the public sector, where she experienced many racist incidents internally. Racist attitudes and comments were tolerated in her workplace – including, for example, the use of the N-word. In addition to bullying, K. was also experiencing sexist treatment. K. sought out therapy due to the ongoing harassment. During the initial consultation, the psychotherapist asked K. discriminatory and harmful questions about her ancestry. The therapist commented on her skin colour and downplayed her experiences of discrimination. K. therefore turned to ZARA for legal advice. A counsellor discussed the steps that she could take and how ZARA could support her. As the situation was very stressful for K., she wanted to take some time to think about it in more detail. The ZARA counsellor assured her that no steps would be taken without her consent and that she could contact ZARA again at any time when she was ready.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention

19 Microaggression towards a Black child at a theatre

S. was attending a theatre performance for children with her two-year-old toddler. During the play, the performing artist brought children on stage. S.'s child also wanted to go on stage, so the artist brought him up as well. S.'s child was the only Black toddler participating in the performance. The artist grabbed the child's hair; this was the only child he did this to. S. wanted to protect her child from microaggressions (→ Glossary, p. 71) like this, so she turned to ZARA with the request to contact the artist and make him aware of his behaviour. A ZARA counsellor wrote a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) to the artist, informing him about microaggressions and passing on the mother's concerns. The artist thanked ZARA for the message.

What did ZARA do?



Documentation



Drafting of a letter of intervention

20 A company logo with racist stereotypes

A person anonymously contacted ZARA to report a company van with a racist logo. The logo denigrated Black people by using racist, stereotypical imagery and dehumanising depictions. The anonymous reporter wanted to lodge a complaint against it. The racist company logo was also used on the company's website. Several similar complaints had been made about the logo in the past. Although ZARA had already written several letters of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) in the past, the company had not yet made any changes to the logo and failed to show any awareness. For this reason, a ZARA counsellor filed an EGVG complaint (→ Glossary, p. 70) in response to the most recent report. This can lead to the company being fined for the racist logo.

What did ZARA do?



Documentation



(Legal) counselling



Reporting to the EGVG

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racist refusal of admission as an example

Racist refusal of entry occurs when a person is refused entry to a venue or club on the basis of their ethnicity. This is forbidden according to the Equal Treatment Act (→ Glossary, p. 70) and the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts (EGVG → Glossary, p. 70)¹.

How can I take action against racist refusal of admission according to the Equal Treatment Act?

Those affected can contact the Equal Treatment Commission (→ Glossary, p. 70) for an assessment of the discrimination. Proceedings before the Equal Treatment Commission are free of charge, but the decisions are not compulsorily enforceable, unlike decisions made by a court.

¹ 1 Article III paragraph 1 line 3 EGVG

In addition to the Equal Treatment Commission, victims can also file a complaint with the relevant civil court. However, there is a not inconsiderable cost risk here.

Those who want to defend themselves against a racist refusal of admission must 'only' make the discrimination credible (Reduction of the burden of proof (→ Glossary, p. 69). If they succeed in doing so, the venue must prove that it was more likely than not that it was permissible reasons (e.g. inappropriate dress, inappropriate behaviour) which led to the refusal of entry.

If a refusal of admission on racial grounds is established, victims are entitled to compensation.

How can I take action against a racist refusal of admission according to the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts?

According to the EGVG, racist refusal of entry can be reported not only by the victim themselves but also by witnesses (Offence prosecuted ex officio → Glossary, p. 71). Police officers who observe such an incident must make a report and relay it to the responsible district administrative authority (→ Glossary, p. 69).

These proceedings are free of charge for the person who reports the incident. The disadvantage is that the person reporting (or ZARA) is not informed about the result of the procedure (No party to the case → Glossary, p. 71).

Similarly, the EGVG does not compensate the person who has been discriminated against. Offenders can be fined up to 1,090 euros.

If this provision of the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts is repeatedly violated, the trade authority must revoke the operator's trade licence. However, ZARA is still not aware of any cases where this has actually happened.

How can ZARA help?

If desired, ZARA can first contact the venue in question with a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) and ask for a statement on the incident. In some cases, depending on the reaction of the respective venue operators or the security companies involved, an out-of-court solution may be found (e.g. clarifying conversation or apology on the part of the venue). ZARA can, for example, provide accompaniment to such conversations.

ZARA also checks whether a law was violated in the incident. If those affected request legal action, ZARA can establish contact with the Ombud for Equal Treatment (→ Glossary, p. 70) so that they can offer support in proceedings before the Equal Treatment Commission.

ZARA can refer certain cases of discrimination to the Litigation Association of NGOs Against Discrimination. The latter then takes over the representation in court and (partially) the cost risk.



View the new recommendations and house rules' template against racism and discrimination:



Public authorities and institutions





This chapter offers a selection of the 105 cases reported to ZARA that took place in the area of public authorities and institutions. This category includes incidents that occur with administrative bodies, educational institutions and other municipal institutions (police excluded).



21 Accusation of drug smuggling with medical consequences

O. fell from the first floor of his flat and injured his foot. An ambulance took him to a hospital in Vienna, where he received a CT scan. The attending doctor discovered something in O.'s stomach and asked him what his most recent meal was – it was *fufu*, a West and Central African dish. After doing some research, the doctor found this explanation plausible. However, the head physician viewed the situation differently, ignored his colleague's assessment and called the police. Shortly afterwards, O. was arrested on suspicion of *body packing*. O. was under constant observation for two days, had to remain without food and received no treatment. In the meantime, his flat was searched. An officer told O.'s partner that he was probably *body packing* 'because that's always the case with Africans'. After all the drug tests came back negative, he received no apology. O. was traumatised by the events. He went to the neunerhaus health centre and finally received treatment there. A counsellor from neunerhaus accompanied O. and his partner to ZARA for legal advice. ZARA investigated the police behaviour and referred him to the Ombud for Equal Treatment for the discrimination at the hospital.






What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Referral to another counselling centre

22 Racist mistake by authorities after identity theft

T. reached out to ZARA due to identity theft. Over 25 years ago, a person with the same surname used his identity during a police stop. The person looks nothing like T. – they're just both Black. Since then, T. has been linked to this person in the Electronic Criminal Police Information System (ECIS). Authorities have repeatedly mixed up the identities, accused T. of criminal offences and submitted false reports. The police have repeatedly turned up at his home and workplace with arrest warrants, which always forced T. to justify himself. Over 25 years, the police have never rectified the administrative error, which has caused T. massive harm: arrests, fines, forced change of residence, loss of earnings, having his passport taken away, difficulties with administrative procedures, health problems and reputational damage. T., under severe psychological strain, turned to ZARA, where he received a relief and strengthening intervention. ZARA documented the case, drafted a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) and referred T. to other counselling centres.

What did ZARA do?





-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of a letter of intervention
-  Referral to another counselling centre



23 Racist treatment in hospital leads to patient's death

G. required care for years and was being looked after by her two daughters. One day, G. felt unwell, so one of her daughters called an ambulance. While being treated by the paramedics, G. was initially responsive but then fell unconscious. Her daughters asked the paramedics for a report but were denied. At the hospital, they asked for their mother to be placed in the ICU but were told that there was no capacity. The attending doctor made the following statement: 'What do you expect the ICU to do for an 80-year-old woman? She's going to die soon anyway.' G. was not cared for properly on the ward – her vital signs were not monitored, her infusions were not changed, and her room was not cleaned. Her daughters were not treated with honesty or respect, but were deliberately given false information. A nurse mentioned that G.'s skin colour had something to do with this poor treatment. One week after being taken by the ambulance, G. died in the hospital. The daughters alerted the hospital staff, but they did not attempt to resuscitate her. The daughters asked the funeral parlour for a ritual ablution but were told this was not allowed because the hospital claimed that G. had a COVID-19 infection, which was not true. After G.'s death, the daughters talked to other Black women about the incident. Many of them had also experienced discrimination in the health sector. The daughters got in contact with ZARA. ZARA supported them in further proceedings with the Ombud for Equal Treatment and the Patient Advocacy Office.







What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Referral to another counselling centre

24 Anti-Asian racism at a secondary school

G.'s parents approached ZARA because their son had been experiencing racism and bullying from his classmates at a secondary school in Lower Austria for over two years. G. was being pushed, hit and insulted at school and was also repeatedly bullied in the class WhatsApp group. This ongoing situation was a massive strain, even leading to health consequences – he experienced increased sleep problems and digestion issues and frequently fell ill. The parents reported the incidents to the class teacher and school administration but to no avail. The parents therefore turned to ZARA. A ZARA counsellor wrote a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) to the school, requesting a meeting. The meeting took place a few weeks later, with the class teacher, school administration and a person from the Board of Education in attendance. Although the meeting went well, it had no effect. There were further incidents in which the teaching staff and administration failed to react appropriately and instead told G. that he shouldn't inform his parents, which he did anyway. ZARA then advised the family to report the incident to the Ombud for Equal Treatment. The family decided to change schools, and ZARA supported them in contacting the Board of Education. The Ombud for Equal Treatment also wrote a letter to the new school to underscore the urgent need for the school change. G. has been doing much better at the new school and his health has also been improving. Encouraged by ZARA, the family has considered taking further steps against the old school and sending a complaint to the Board of Education.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and/or strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of a letter of intervention
-  Accompaniment to authorities
-  Referral to another counselling centre

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racial discrimination in education as an example

Students are legally protected from racial discrimination and harassment (→ Glossary, p. 69) by educational staff. If racial discrimination occurs, this constitutes a violation of the Equal Treatment Act (→ Glossary, p. 70) or the relevant state laws (e.g. the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act → Glossary, p. 73).

Defending oneself legally against racial discrimination in the education sector is complex, as this area is governed in part by federal laws and in part by state laws. The power disparity between the school or teacher and the student is often another reason that victims are discouraged from taking legal action.

How can I take action against discrimination in education?

First of all, there is the option of talking with the person involved or their superior with the aim of achieving a change in behaviour and/or to get the school to address racist incidents and to raise the awareness of as many people as possible involved in everyday school life. You can also lodge complaints about misconduct in schools to the Boards of Education.

Legally, you can, for example, proceed according to the Equal Treatment Act. To determine whether a violation has occurred, proceedings can be initiated before the Equal Treatment Commission (→ Glossary, p. 70). This procedure does not entail any cost risks, but the decisions are not compulsorily enforceable.

In addition, it is possible to bring a suit to court. In these proceedings, however, the plaintiff bears a cost risk. The consequence of such a suit can be the payment of damages. However, the often desired change in behaviour can only be brought about indirectly through compensation for damages.

In addition to Equal Treatment Act, disciplinary consequences (e.g. reprimands, fines, dismissals) or criminal provisions (e.g. insults) may also be applicable, depending on the facts of the case.

How can ZARA help?

During counselling sessions, ZARA will discuss all relevant aspects and options with you so that you can decide for yourself what path you would like to take. For example, ZARA can contact the school, accompany you to mediations or draft a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) that points out the discrimination and demands improvements. ZARA training can be recommended to the school or class, for example on the topic of diversity or awareness: <http://www.zara.or.at/en/training>

If those affected request legal action, ZARA can establish contact with the Ombud for Equal Treatment (→ Glossary, p. 70) so that they can offer support in proceedings before the Equal Treatment Commission.

Politics and media

This chapter contains a selection of the 141 incidents reported to ZARA that involved politics and the media. This category includes any racist incidents that were provoked or spread by politicians, political parties or traditional media (print, radio and television) both online and offline.



25 Stereotypical TV report about Arab tourists

M. stumbled upon a TV programme on the internet that had racist stereotypes. M. therefore reported it to ZARA and asked them to bring it to the broadcaster's attention. In the programme, the purported behaviour of tourists from the Arab world was discussed. The problematic behaviour of individuals was generalised to all members of this group of people. The stereotypes implied that Arab tourists generally ignore Austrian laws and customs. In addition, the Arab way of life was portrayed as generally incompatible with 'Austrian values' and was described as dangerous to the local population. This was further exacerbated by the inaccurate use of facts and statistics in the article. For example, the mere increase in the number of tourists from the Arab world was linked to an increase in complaints about tourists without any evidence being provided for this claim. This creates a highly sensational discourse that provides a breeding ground for hatred and prejudice. ZARA therefore drafted a letter of intervention (→ Glossary, p. 71) to the television station, in which the issues were pointed out.

What did ZARA do?



Documentation



Drafting of a letter of intervention

26 Racist Facebook posts by mayoral candidate

G. discovered two posts with hateful slogans on Facebook and reported the content to ZARA. The user who published the posts was running for mayor of his town and was collecting declarations of support. In one post, he presented 'remigration' (i.e. the forced expulsion of certain groups of migrants) as an alleged solution to numerous social problems and, in particular, supported denying the right to asylum to Muslim migrants across the board. Furthermore, the post explicitly linked Muslim people to violent crime, rape and welfare abuse. The user also called out individual nationalities that he saw as particularly 'problematic', thereby fueling hatred against members of these groups. In a second Facebook post, the user trivialised National Socialist crimes by portraying Adolf Hitler and National Socialism as comparable to today's political left. G. asked ZARA to get back to him and received counselling, during which G. was informed about ZARA's further course of action. ZARA forwarded the posts to the NS Reporting Office, as they constituted incitement to hatred (→ Glossary, p. 72) and a violation of the Prohibition Act (→ Glossary, p. 72). In addition, ZARA reported the posts as a 'Trusted Partner' (→ Glossary, S. 72), leading to their removal from the platform.

What did ZARA do?



Documentation



(Legal) counselling



Request for removal from a public space



Report to the NS Reporting Office

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racist media coverage as an example

One-sided, racist reporting in the media is often legally unprosecutable or difficult to prosecute. Newspapers can decide for themselves which news and (permitted) opinions they publish. A complaint can be successful if someone's rights have been violated, e.g. in cases of defamation, incitement to hatred (→ see Know your rights – Taking incitement to hatred as an example, p. 34), violations of the presumption of innocence or violations of the Prohibition Act (→ Glossary, p. 72).

In addition, there is a voluntary self-regulation for print media and their websites: the Code of Honour of the Austrian Press Council¹. It sets out certain rules for journalists' work, such as avoiding blanket suspicion and discriminatory and racist reporting.

How can I take action against racist media coverage?

Anyone can make a complaint about racist reporting directly to the media owner (e.g. the newspaper) and emphasise that readers reject racist articles or statements. In addition, one can file a notice or a complaint with the Austrian Press Council. Regardless of whether the media organisation subsequently has to

print the decision, the Austrian Press Council publishes selected decisions on its website.

→ **Warning:** The Press Council is not responsible for media that is solely online, on the radio or on television.

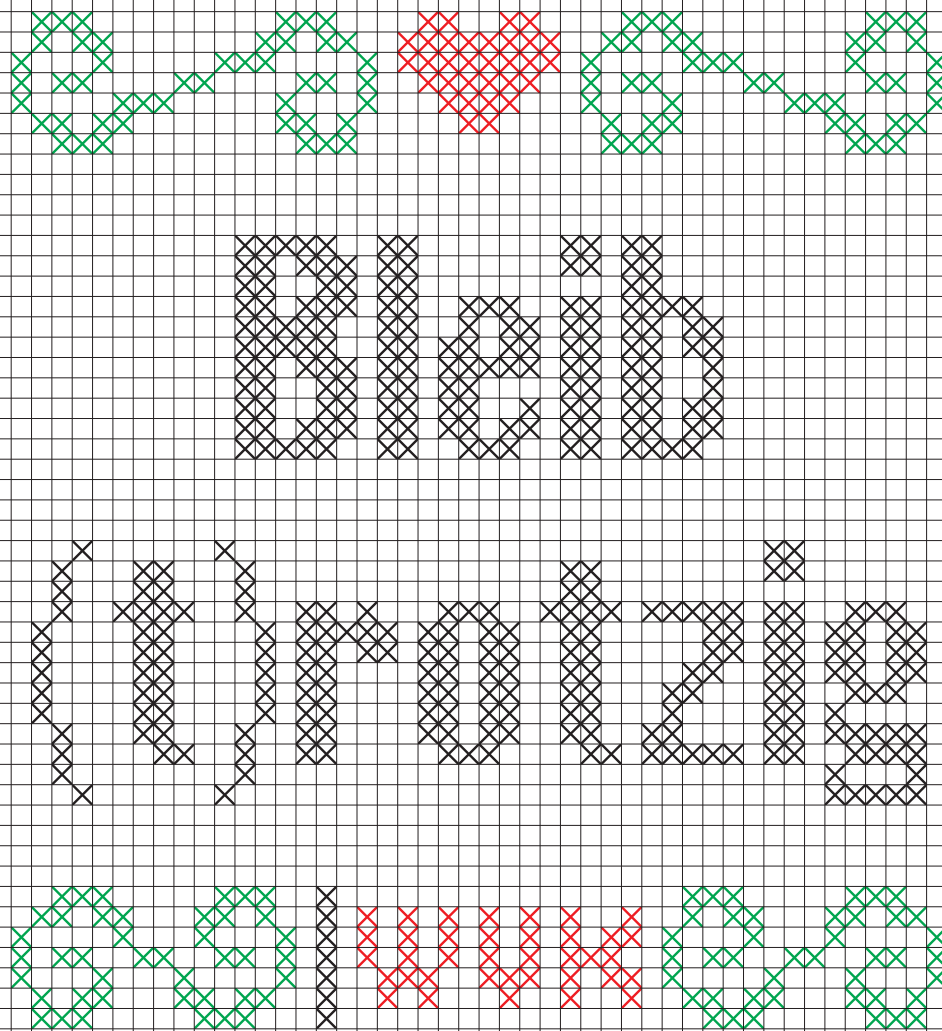
In some cases, it may also make sense to seek legal assistance in order to proceed under the Media Act.

How can ZARA help?

ZARA counsellors can support you in all these steps and offer legal advice.

→ **Please note:** When reporting, be sure to include relevant links, screenshots, the name of the print medium, information about the content and the time of publication.

¹ → www.presserat.at



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www.wuk.at

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Police






This chapter contains a selection of the 56 incidents reported to ZARA that involved the police. This includes all reports that are connected in any way with security administration and with public security bodies.



27 Ethnic profiling of teenagers

A group of adolescents from Vienna, including V., were sitting in a public square. Two police officers stopped them and wanted to give them a fine. V. was speaking to one of the officers and gesticulated in a normal manner. The officer then told V. not to do that. As the police officer began shouting and grabbed V.'s wrist firmly, V.'s friends started filming. V. took a step back, but the officer moved towards him. V. demanded that they leave him alone several times because he did nothing. Suddenly, numerous police cars arrived. The police officer pushed V. to the ground and put his knee on his shoulder and hand. Another officer blocked the camera's view. The officer assaulting V. exclaimed, 'Your taxi is here!' and took V. away. His friends were forbidden from accompanying him. The police informed V.'s mother but sent her to the wrong police station. V. spent the night in a cell. He was presented with papers that he wanted to read over, but the officer told him to simply sign them. At no point was V. asked to make a statement. Once he returned home, V. turned to ZARA. A counsellor gave him an overview of his legal options and referred him to Wir sind auch Wien for psychosocial support. His mother received continued legal support from a law firm she was familiar with.





What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Referral to another counselling centre
-  Drafting of complaints and appeals

28 Police repeatedly accuse driver of cannabis use

A. was the only Black person with locs living in a village in Vorarlberg. He had repeatedly been pulled over during supposedly 'random' police stops. This happened again one day. Unlike with others, the officers check his vehicle in detail. A. was then asked if he had been drinking alcohol. He replied that he generally does not drink. He was then asked when he 'last' consumed cannabis. A. replied very clearly that he had *never* done so. It was obvious that he was being accused of using cannabis because of his locs. A. had already contacted ZARA about these arbitrary traffic checks the previous year, but at that time the six-week deadline for a guidelines complaint for ethnic profiling (→ Glossary, p. 70) had already passed. This time, A. contacted ZARA immediately after the incident. A ZARA counsellor drafted a guidelines complaint (→ Glossary, p. 72) for him, which was rejected by the Vorarlberg regional police directorate. ZARA conducted a relief and strengthening intervention with A. and documented the case.





What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of complaints and appeals

29 Administrative fine after racist house search

L. had been living in a village in Lower Austria for over 30 years and had already retired. One day, a knock at the door came. Two young men dressed in plain clothes were at the door and stated they were from the criminal investigation department. L.'s son had an addiction, so he was familiar with the procedure for house searches, as these had happened several times in the past. L. behaved calmly and cooperatively. One of the officers searched the room while the other stood silently in the room and looked at L. with a mean expression. When L. asked the officer why he was looking at him so angrily, the officer approached him and punched him in the face. L., shocked, said, 'You have no right to hit me.' The officer replied, 'Yes, I have every right.' and pushed him to the ground. He then handcuffed him, pulled out his gun, took the safety off and pointed it at L. A neighbour noticed what was happening and called the police. A few minutes later, a dozen officers entered the flat, and L. was taken to the police station, where he was accused of resisting law enforcement and making dangerous threats (→ Glossary, p. 70). They claimed that he took an exercise bike and threatened to throw it at the officers. Subsequently, L. was also given a weapons ban. The fact that it was implausible for an elderly man like L. to throw an exercise bike was ignored. L. reached out to ZARA. A counsellor helped him write a guidelines complaint (→ Glossary, p. 72). ZARA documented his case and conducted a relief and strengthening intervention.




What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Relief and strengthening intervention
-  Drafting of complaints and appeals

30 Racist police stop of a delivery driver

A. was working as a food delivery driver. He is from Egypt and had been living in Vienna for several years but didn't yet speak German very well. While delivering an order on his e-scooter, he was stopped and searched by police officers because a major event was taking place nearby that day, and some streets were cordoned off for it. The officer asked A. why he was driving without a licence and registration. A. then explained to her that the vehicle was an e-scooter and that it didn't require a driving licence. Nevertheless, the officer called for backup. The officers who arrived treated A. in a patronising manner, as he could only communicate with them in English. They asked A. to open his delivery bag. A., wanting to comply with this request, was just about to open the bag when one of the officers pulled out his firearm and pointed it at him. The police stop took a long time, and A., who had a weak heart, eventually fell unconscious. Fortunately, due to the big event happening nearby, an ambulance was in the immediate vicinity and could attend to him. A. was suspended from his job for a few weeks as a result of this incident and had to prove to his employer that the police stop prevented him from making the delivery. A. turned to ZARA, where he received counselling and a relief intervention. A counsellor informed him about the option to lodge a procedural or guidelines complaint, but A. decided against it. The counsellor offered to report the incident to the Investigation and Complaints Office for Police Conduct on his behalf, which he accepted.

What did ZARA do?

-  Documentation
-  (Legal) counselling
-  Report to the Investigation and Complaints Office (→ Glossary, p. 70)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS – Taking racial discrimination by the police as an example

If police officers racially discriminate against someone in the course of their work, there are ways to take action in certain situations. Certain codes of conduct are laid out in the Directive for Interventions by Members of the Public Security Services (→ Glossary, p. 72). For example, police officers must refrain from doing anything that could give the impression of bias or could be perceived as discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. According to the directive, officers must also inform those targeted by the official police act of the reason for the intervention and must give their officer number upon request.

Additionally, various laws¹ regulate when police officers may carry out ID checks. The police are allowed to carry out ID checks only if there is a legal basis for doing so. Being checked solely based on skin colour or ethnicity is unlawful (Ethnic profiling → Glossary, p. 70).

How can I take action against racist police violence?

If, for example, a person is stopped on the basis of ethnic profiling, the person affected can file a procedural complaint (→ Glossary, p. 71) with the provincial administrative court or a guidelines complaint with the competent provincial police directorate within six weeks.

If a procedural complaint is filed, independent judges decide whether the intervention of the police officers was unlawful. There is no right to compensation in these proceedings. In addition, there is a cost risk for the complainant. As a result of such a procedure, disciplinary proceedings can be initiated against the acting police officer, but the victims have no influence on this and receive no information about it.

If a guidelines complaint is made, the allegations will be investigated and the complain-

ant must be informed in writing whether there has been a breach of regulations. The regional police department can also facilitate a discussion between the department's representatives, the officers concerned and the complainant. This is called a mediation talk (→ Glossary, p. 71).

If the person concerned is satisfied with the outcome of this mediation, the procedure is finished. Up until then, there is no cost risk. However, if the person concerned is unsatisfied with the mediation, the procedure continues in writing. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the written result, they can request a review by the National Administrative Court. In this case, there is also a cost risk, which is why victims often do not apply for a judicial review.

How can ZARA help?

ZARA can support you with procedural and guideline complaints and accompany you through the process. In some cases, ZARA can take over the cost risk through a specific legal aid fund.

→ **Here, you can find the ZARA brochures** on dealing with the police for victims and witnesses:

¹ e.g. § 35 Security Police Act (→ Glossary, p. 72),

§ 118 Code of Criminal Procedure (StPO), § 34 Aliens' Police Act (FPG)



Employment

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS –

Taking racial discrimination in the workplace as an example

If you are racially discriminated against or harassed in connection with employment (e.g. when applying for a job, being promoted, being paid or dismissed), this constitutes a violation of the Equal Treatment Act (→ Glossary, p. 70).

How can I take action against racial discrimination in employment?

One option is to lodge a complaint with the Equal Treatment Commission (→ Glossary, p. 70). These proceedings are free of charge, but the Equal Treatment Commission, unlike the courts, can only express recommendations but cannot force an action.

On the other hand, you can raise a civil suit in court. A court decision is always legally binding and can also force the (potential) employer to pay damages. In a civil lawsuit, however, there is a considerable risk of legal costs for the plaintiff.

The law stipulates that the person concerned 'only' has to make a prima facie case of discrimination (Reduction of the burden of proof → Glossary, p. 69). If this prima facie case can be made, the court/Equal Treatment Commission must find discrimination if the (potential) employer cannot prove that it is more likely than not that another, permissible reason was decisive for the action in question.

An unlawful dismissal can be contested, but there is a very short deadline – just two weeks – to do so. The Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer) provides support in filing a legal challenge with the Labour and Social Court. Ideally, you should contact the Chamber of

Labour legal experts as soon as you receive the notice of termination.

How can ZARA help?

Our prioritisation of victim-centred counselling work – so that we are able to support and accompany victims of racism more intensively and sustainably – entails a significant additional effort in case processing. Due to our limited resources, in 2022 we decided to limit our counselling work to the areas of life for which there is no support from other relevant counselling services. As a result, employment-related reports are referred to the Ombud for Equal Treatment or the Chamber of Labour, where the next steps are discussed in consultations and, if necessary, action is taken.

Counselling and support services

Ombud for Equal Treatment

www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at/unser-angebot/beratung-und-unterstuetzung.html

Chamber of Labour:

www.arbeiterkammer.at/kontakt

Our demands for a national action plan against racism

The government draws up national action plans in cooperation with the administration, civil society and other experts to prioritise specific concerns. The 2020–2024 government programme included creating a national action plan against racism – which was not implemented.

The former government’s plan was partly due to the EU Commission’s work, which recommended that all member states implement such a national plan by the end of 2022.

The EU Commission’s recommendation, and the urgent need to implement an action plan, remain in place in the current legislative period. To take comprehensive and effective action against structural and institutional racism, ZARA, together with other civil and community organisations, continues to call for a NAP.

The following goals and measures are intended to serve as a proposal for how such a plan should be organised.

Goals

- 1. Safety and support**
- 2. Equality of opportunity and treatment**
- 3. Participation and representation**
- 4. Solidarity and community**

Summary of measures

1) Safety and support

To increase protection against racist incidents and criminal offences, accessing effective support should be easier for people who experience racism. The police should protect the human rights of all people, regardless of their personal characteristics. New measures to make reporting racist incidents and a victim-centred process will help to achieve this goal.

2) Equality of opportunity and treatment

Addressing the lack of equal opportunities for people who experience racism in all the areas of life touched on in the Racism Report. Active measures must be taken to combat socioeconomic inequality. Effective protection against racism and discrimination in all areas of life must be ensured in order to promote inclusion and equal participation, such as improving protection against racism and discrimination in the school system.

3) Participation and representation

Marginalised people must be supported and have representation in all areas of life, especially in areas where they are currently under-represented. Racism in the media must be combated, and we must remove barriers to access to leadership positions for marginalised people.

4) Solidarity and community

Communal efforts to understand and eliminate the prevalence and impact of racism must take place. These must be a critical analysis of racism in all school curricula, along with a simultaneous revision of racist content. This serves to promote civil courage and raise awareness of individual responsibility and the role of society as a whole in the fight against racism.

Measures to achieve Goal 1: Safety and support

Raising awareness

→ Target-group-oriented hate crime awareness training and initiatives to support specific groups that may be affected by discrimination are offered to civic organisations and people working in the health, education and youth sectors.

Funding

→ Organisations that offer legal and psychosocial counselling to victims of racism and empower them by providing them with guidance, planning, decision-making and coping mechanisms have increased (financial) independence.

- Training for judges ensures the practical application of 'special aggravating circumstances' in accordance with Section 33 para. 1 line 5 of the Austrian Criminal Code in proceedings for prejudice-motivated offences. In addition, the training addresses the recognition of prejudicial motives and the special needs of victims of hate crimes.

Access to justice

- The right to equal treatment includes a right for associations to initiate proceedings in all cases according to the equality legislation for the Ombud for Equal Treatment (→ Glossary, p. 70) and the Litigation Association (Klagsverband).
- ZARA, the Litigation Association and other relevant organisations are granted party status (→ Glossary, p. 71) in administrative criminal proceedings under the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts (→ Glossary, p. 70) (Art. III para. 1 line 3 and 4) and in proceedings under the Austrian Trade Act concerning the revocation of trade licences on the grounds of racist behaviour on the part of the trader as defined in Section 87 para. 1 line 3 of the Act.

Anti-racism officers

- It's recognised that dedicated anti-racism officers are needed in public institutions: similar to disability officers, they keep a keen eye on the perspective of victims of racism in order to point out and reflect on systemically entrenched, small-minded perspectives.

Police

- Police officers are aware of their function as role models and representatives of the state. Their official actions always put de-escalation first, which helps strengthen the trust of all people living in Austria in the police.

- As a preventive measure, working conditions in the police force are improved so that the officers' exhaustion and stress levels are reduced so that they are able to take on this challenging and demanding work.

- Community policing (e.g. neighbourhood police) is increased; trust is built through significant, respectful contact between communities and the police, which leads to the police having a strong understanding of the communities involved. This supports the further development of a police culture that prevents racism.

- Police misconduct is investigated through independent complaint mechanisms.

- The cost risk for procedural (→ Glossary, p. 71) and guideline complaints (→ Glossary, p. 72) is abolished.

- Responses to guideline complaints (→ Glossary, p. 72) include well-founded justifications, and all complainants have the opportunity to participate in a 'mediation talk' (→ Glossary, p. 71), which is moderated by an external and independent body. At the request of the complainant, the police officers involved in the incident will participate in the mediation talk for guideline complaints.

- In the case of police misconduct that meets the standards of criminal law, the internal disciplinary standard for state officials is stricter than criminal law, marking the outermost limit of social coexistence.

- Those affected by possible police misconduct are reliably referred to the suitable civic institutions by the police.

- Appropriate measures to effectively prevent ethnic profiling (→ Glossary, p. 70) are developed, systematically implemented and regularly evaluated.

- Administrative fines are written in a suffi-

ciently transparent manner so that they do not give the impression of being racially motivated.

- Training on hate crimes (→ Glossary, p. 70) and the sensitive use of language prevent secondary victimisation and retraumatisation during questioning and when submitting a report.
- Victims of racism who have perceived police work as prejudiced have the opportunity for easy-to-access mediation talks with the police officers involved and their superiors. The needs of victims are taken seriously.
- The police will pursue measures to ensure the reliable identification of prejudicial motives in criminal offences when reports are made and in their subsequent investigative activities. They will further develop the measures in a regular evaluation process to strengthen them.

Hate crimes

- A referral system (→ Glossary, p. 73) is established that guarantees the best possible legal, social and psychological support, along with comprehensive protection and security for all those affected by hate crimes. Under the referral system, cooperation between law enforcement and community organisations, victim protection agencies, support organisations and initiatives is founded on a legal basis that includes standards for data transfer to ensure that the referrals ensure the security and data protection of hate crime victims. All organisations involved in the referral system that work directly with victims take measures to become trauma-sensitive organisations and train their staff accordingly.
- Cooperation between different community organisations, victim protection agencies, support organisations and initiatives is standardised and adequately funded to ensure comprehensive support for victims

of hate crimes.

- Training for law enforcement agencies follows a victim-centred approach and includes strategies to prevent secondary victimisation (→ Glossary, p. 72). At the same time, the training includes information on how to deal with victims of hate crimes with sensitivity, and, in particular, how to refer them to community organisations, victim protection agencies, support organisations and initiatives.
- Comprehensive awareness-raising measures on hate crimes are carried out on an ongoing basis and are financed by the public sector, with the aim is to raise awareness among (potential) victims, allies and the general public to recognise prejudice, understand the social impact of hate crimes and strengthen their ability to take a stand and take practical action in the event of a hate crime.
- The Federal Ministry of the Interior's annual Hate Crime report in Austria is guaranteed and supplemented by data on hate crimes systematically collected by the Federal Ministry of Justice. All institutions and organisations involved in the referral system regularly exchange information on the data collected on hate crimes in order to gain insights into the extent, type and unrecorded cases of hate crimes.

Measures to achieve Goal 2:

Equality of opportunity and treatment

will take place.

Inclusion

- Equal opportunities for all are achieved through an inclusion-based, rather than integration-based, approach. Unlike integration, the concept of inclusion views all people as equal individuals, is not oriented towards a standard declared as the norm, creates an environment of equal participation and, as a result, supports deeper system changes.
- All people whose primary residence – and thus centre of life – is in Austria are granted the right to vote and stand for election after three years at the latest.

Protection against discrimination

- The Equal Treatment Act provides uniform protection throughout Austria in all areas of life for all grounds of discrimination listed in Article 21 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (→ Glossary, p. 69), such as skin colour, ethnic or social origin, language, membership of a national minority, religion or belief, political or other opinion, genetic characteristics, sex, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- The Equal Treatment Act protects against discrimination in the areas of art, culture, sports, media, police, justice, public space, artificial intelligence and online (e.g. computer games, social media, metaverse).
- A well-founded discussion on the question of whether the German term 'Rasse' should be removed from all Austrian legal provision

Education

- The structures of the education system ensure equal opportunities and prevent the discrimination and exclusion of students.
- There are no compulsory separate German classes, but rather inclusive schooling for all.
- Multilingualism is part of everyday school life. Not only English, French, Spanish and Italian are promoted in schools, but also languages that are commonly spoken in Austria. Teachers build the relevant competencies through training and further education. All students have the opportunity to attend classes in a language they understand.
- Anti-racist thinking, and the understanding of racism as a tool, is part of the curriculum and is dealt with in different subjects (e.g. history, geography, economics, political education).

Goods and services

- Providers of goods and services are committed to an anti-racist organisational culture and anti-racist policies towards their customers.
- Providers' existing codes of conduct or house rules include anti-racist rules of conduct.
- Providers analyse where and how degrading, hurtful, humiliating and exclusionary behaviour may occur towards their custom-

ers and take appropriate measures to actively counteract such misconduct at both the individual and organisational level in order to carry out anti-racist behaviour when dealing with customers.

- Providers with 50 or more employees establish effective internal grievance procedures for customers who have been treated in a derogatory, hurtful, humiliating and exclusionary manner. They develop these procedures together with people possessing lived-experiences of racism and community organisations.
- Anti-racist codes of conduct, house rules and complaint systems are easy for customers to access.
- Providers motivate their staff to participate in training and further education that strengthens their anti-racist views.
- Providers of goods and services, sector-specific interest groups, counselling institutions and community organisations network with the aim of continuously improving the anti-racist treatment of customers and

proaches by providers of goods and services is regularly monitored by an institution adequately financed by the public sector.

implementing targeted prevention measures.

Sanctioning discrimination

- All violations of anti-discrimination protection standards (e.g. Art III para. 1 line 3 of the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts; Equal Treatment Act (→ Glossary, p. 70) by commercial enterprises are recorded in a database by the competent authorities, which facilitates the correct application of Section 87 para. 1 line 3 of the Austrian Trade Act regarding discriminatory conduct.
- In addition, systematic communication between relevant authorities ensures that in case of repeated violations of anti-discrimination standards by a business, the business licence is revoked.
- The implementation of codes of conduct or house rules that strengthen anti-racist ap-

Measures to achieve Goal 3: Participation and representation

Education

- The make-up of elementary and secondary school teachers reflects the diversity of the people living in Austria.
- The teaching materials also reflect the diversity of Austrian society.
- There are effective structures that provide support for victims of racism and other forms of discrimination and hatred online in every educational institution and education board.
- Racist behaviour by teachers leads to disciplinary action.
- The Office of the School Ombuds at the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and

Research will be further developed into an easy-to-access contact point for victims of racism and other forms of discrimination whose complaints have not been dealt with appropriately at their own educational institution. It has relevant expertise and sufficient resources to adequately support those affected. In the annual reports, specific incidents of racism and other forms of discrimination and grievances are named, documented and published anonymously.

Police

- The composition of the police force reflects the diversity of the people living in Austria, as a diverse team benefits from different experiences and thus allows for a better approach to different parts of the population.
- The Federal Ministry of the Interior produces an annual diversity report that contains nationwide data on the personnel structures of the security authorities and all measures that the Ministry has implemented annually in the field of diversity in order to counter-act structural racism.

Legislative changes

- Legislators focus their analysis of legislative proposals not only on their effectiveness and taking into account equality between women and men, but also include considerations on overcoming structural racism. Establishing a non-partisan working group on racism in parliament (i.e. an intergroup) is a step towards achieving this.
- Legislative changes and the associated public discourse, especially in the field of counter-terrorism, take the protection

of all human rights (e.g. freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, anti-discrimination) seriously and do not lead to silencing (→ Glossary, p. 72) people assigned to socially constructed groups.

Asylum system and immigration

- Political decision makers and legislators shape the asylum system, immigration and integration policy according to human rights standards – so, in an anti-racist way. They don't misuse these topics for racist discourse. The administration takes precautions against structural and institutional racism and implements measures in these areas accordingly.

Media

- Through continuous effort, the different professional groups within media companies reflect the diversity of the people living in Austria.
- The media no longer mentions the national origin of perpetrators because the link between crime and background has no informational value but instead supports and reinforces prejudice.
- Media professionals undergo special courses in their core curricula that focus on the role of the media in an anti-racist society. They learn to take an intersectional approach (→ Glossary, p. 71) to their journalistic work, thereby establishing an awareness-raising approach on the topic of racism. In this way, they promote a public discourse that is anti-racist and triggers

constructive debates.

Measures to achieve Goal 4: Solidarity and community

Funding

- The availability of resources is adequately and sustainably ensured for institutions and organisations whose mandates focus on combating and preventing racism, such as anti-Semitism or anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Roma and Sinti racism, and who therefore significantly contribute to promoting social cohesion and a more resilient democracy.
- Adequate and sustainable funding covers counselling, documentation, data analysis, networking, prevention and awareness-raising work, along with supervision, safe spaces, training in the form of workshops, symposiums, materials and the costs for multilingualism, among other things.
- Adequate and sustainable funding enables regular exchange and implementation of joint projects with relevant stakeholders.
- Comprehensive, publicly funded, multilingual campaigns support the development of an anti-racist society.
- Overall social awareness of racism and programmes for raising awareness and empowering those (actually and potentially)

affected by racism are systematically, sustainably and comprehensively promoted.

Exchange and networking

- A discussion platform is set up where NGOs and community organisations can regularly and effectively exchange information with the federal government on current challenges in the fight against racism and its prevention, as well as on relevant scientific analyses.

Ombuds Office

- The selection and appointment procedure of ombuds is reformed; this reform is carried out in close consultation with civil society and guarantees the political independence of the Ombuds Office (→ Glossary, p. 73)
- The reformed selection procedure enables a larger number of potential candidates to apply, which does justice to the diversity of people living in Austria and thus includes a broader spectrum of social groups with different educational backgrounds. Human rights expertise is a deciding criterion.
- The selection and appointment process of ombuds is based on broad consultation with and/or participation of NGOs and community organisations.
- The selection and appointment procedure guarantees universal coverage of all human-rights-relevant topics so that the Ombuds Office enjoys full confidence in handling complaints from all people living in Austria, regardless of whether they're asylum seekers, victims of racial police violence or other forms of racism.

- The recommendations of the Ombuds Office include, where appropriate, measures to combat structural and institutional racism.

values, solidarity and equal treatment. Civil courage is an everyday part of anti-racist actions.

- Lifelong learning, in the sense of constant reflection on and dismantling of prejudices, is part of a fundamental anti-racist approach, which takes criticism of racist behaviour and approaches seriously and leads to the careful handling of racist incidents.

Individual responsibility

- Anti-racist thinking and actions are part of our day-to-day life and socialisation, while structural and institutional racism are recognised as such and combated.
- Acquiring knowledge and reflecting on racism and other forms of discrimination is natural, i.e. part of our everyday life. Genuine interest in the experiences of those affected by racism, talking and listening to each other without judgement is part of this knowledge building. Engaging in potentially uncomfortable conversations about racism and *white* privilege is also part of this.
- *White* privilege is recognised as a reality, which makes us take responsibility for racism as a construct that structures our society, economy and politics – in other words, our thinking and social coexistence.
- *White* privilege and resources are used to share power and open up spaces or create opportunities for participation for those affected by racism.
- Actively examining racism, i.e. acting in an anti-racist way, is part of our everyday life. This includes, for example, critically examining existing norms and customs and recognising opportunities to act as allies in order to actively stand up for anti-racist

- There is a consensus throughout society that no one wants to live in a society where racism is part of everyday life for many human beings, so racism is always addressed.

Responsibility of decision-makers

- The make-up of all state institutions reflects the diversity of the population. Staff management proactively seeks to increase staff diversity.
- Public institutions and organisations monitor individual actions and overarching organisational rules, measures and practices in order to identify structural and institutional racism quickly and to enable active action against these forms of racism.
- Public institutions regularly publish standardised statistics and reports on complaints about racism, on racism at the structural and institutional level, and on measures and prevention work in the field of racism.
- In public discourse, taking responsibility for racism's instrumental use is a fixed part of political and media culture.

GERECHTIGKEIT MUSS SEIN

Die Arbeiterkammer steht für soziale Gerechtigkeit.
Wir setzen uns seit mehr als 100 Jahren für die Rechte
der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer ein.

Damals. Heute. Für immer.



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WIEN

GERECHTIGKEIT MUSS SEIN

Divers



tät

Für ein vielfältiges Wien müssen wir uns alle einschalten.
Denn wo Diversität Platz hat, hat Rassismus keinen.

**BILDUNG.
VIELFALT INKLUSIVE.**



**DAS BFI – IHR VERLÄSSLICHER PARTNER FÜR
AUS- UND WEITERBILDUNG**

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Contact points for victims of racism

In addition to ZARA, there are many other organisations that can offer you support. The majority are based in Vienna and are active throughout Austria.

AFRO RAINBOW AUSTRIA (ARA)

Contact point for and by LGBTQI+ migrants from African countries in Austria.

Email: office@afrorainbow.at

Website: www.afrorainbow.at

REPORTING CENTRE FOR ANTISEMITISM

Documents and advises victims and witnesses of anti-Semitic incidents.

Email: meldung@ikg-wien.at

Tel.: +43 1 53104-777 or +43 1 3698526 (for cases of imminent danger)

Website: www.antisemitismus-meldestelle.at

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE FOR ISLAMOPHOBIA & ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM

Documentation and counselling centre for people who experience Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

Email: office@dokustelle.at

Tel.: +43 676 4040005

Website: www.dokustelle.at

OMBUD FOR EQUAL TREATMENT (GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSANWALTSCHAFT (GAW))

Offers counselling and support for discriminatory situations.

Email: gaw@bka.gv.at

Tel.: 0800 206119

Website: www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at

HELPING HANDS

Supports with (foreign) law, integration and racism-related problems by offering concrete and individual solutions.

Email: info@helpinghands.at

Tel.: +43 1 310888010

Website: www.helpinghands.at

INITIATIVE FOR A NON-DISCRIMINATORY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Anonymously documents experiences of discrimination in education

Email: office@diskriminierungsfrei.at

Website: www.diskriminierungsfrei.at

ROMANO CENTRO

Works against discrimination against Roma and Sinti and offers life and social counselling, especially for women.

Email: office@romano-centro.org

Tel.: +43 1 7496336 or

+43 1 749633615 (to make an appointment)

Website: www.romano-centro.org

UNDOK – CONTACT POINT FOR THE UNION SUPPORT OF UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

Provides workers with or without insecure residence or limited access to the labour market with information about their rights and offers advice and support in enforcing labour and social law claims.

Email: beratung@undok.at

Tel.: +43 1 5344439040

Website: www.undok.at

In addition to these contact points, there are other anti-discrimination offices throughout Austria. ZARA will be happy to put you in touch with them as needed.

Glossary

HARRASMENT (BELÄSTIGUNG)

Harassment is a form of discrimination under the Equal Treatment Act (see below) in which a person's dignity is or is intended to be harmed on the basis of one or more specific (actual or attributed) characteristics, such as ethnic origin, religion or gender and which creates or is intended to create a burdensome (e.g. intimidating or hostile) environment for the person affected.

INSULT (BELEIDIGUNG)

see → Simple insult or → Qualified insult

REDUCTION OF THE BURDEN OF PROOF (BEWEIS-LASTERLEICHTERUNG)

Evidence and credibility are important elements for clarifying the facts before a court. Normally, a person who claims that their rights have been violated must provide evidence to prove this. In certain cases, however, the law makes it easier for victims. For example, the Equal Treatment Act stipulates that it is sufficient if the plaintiff can credibly present a case of discrimination – in this case, it's then assumed that the discrimination has taken place. The defendant (e.g. the person accused of discriminating) must then prove that another motive caused the discriminatory treatment. Credibility is easier to achieve than proof.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY (BEZIRKS-VERWALTUNGSBEHÖRDEN – BVB)

The district administrative authorities encompass the district authorities or the municipalities (in towns and cities with their own statutes; in Vienna, the individual municipal district authorities take on this role). Some of the district administrative authorities' duties in the area of security administration are carried out by regional police departments. The district administrative authority generally is responsible for disciplining those accused of administrative violations in the first instance.

CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Since December 2000, the Charter has defined the rights and freedoms of people living in the EU. The Charter is binding for EU institutions and bodies; it is

only binding for member states when they implement EU law. Among other things, Article 21 of the Charter prohibits 'discrimination based on any ground, such as sex, 'race' ('Rasse'), skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic attributes, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation'. *Note: Although the provision aims to combat racism, the directive includes the problematic term 'Rasse' ('race'), which suggests that there are human 'races'. However, the concept of 'race' is a result of racist and colonialist thinking. There is no biological justification for this term and it should be used with extreme caution in the German-speaking world. ZARA has long been calling for this term to be removed from legal texts.*

→ [www.europarl.europa.eu/
charter/pdf/text_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

CYBERBULLYING (§ 107C STGB)

Cyberbullying is deliberate public insult, humiliation or harassment through electronic means of communication (e.g. cell phone, internet), which unreasonably affects the life of the person concerned. The singular publication of nude photos, for example, can also constitute a criminal offence. However, the content must be retrievable for a longer period of time to be considered unlawful.

CYBERSTALKING (§ 107A STGB)

Cyberstalking describes the use of digital communication technologies (e.g. message services, emails) to follow or harass another person. Cyberstalking can occur, for example, when a person repeatedly contacts someone via the internet against their will. Such acts are considered cyberstalking if they continue over a longer period of time and unreasonably affect the lifestyle of the person concerned.

SIMPLE INSULT (EINFACHE BELEIDIGUNG (§ 115 ABS 1 STGB))

A simple insult is a criminal offence that occurs when a person is insulted, ridiculed, physically abused or threatened with physical abuse in front of at least three other people (in addition to the offender and the person concerned).

INTRODUCTORY ACT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACTS (EINFÜHRUNGSGESETZ ZU DEN VERWALTUNGSVERFAHRENSGESETZEN)

Article III of the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts 2008 is an administrative provision that forbids, for example, racial discrimination when entering premises or shops or in the access of services intended for use by the general public. Such acts may be reported to the district or municipal authorities.

INVESTIGATION AND COMPLAINTS OFFICE (ERMITTLUNGS- UND BESCHWERDESTELLE MISSHANDLUNGSVORWÜRFE (EBM))

The EBM is an independent office within the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (*Bundesamt zur Korruptionsprävention und Korruptionsbekämpfung* – BAK). It was established on 22 January 2024. Nationwide, it is exclusively responsible for investigations and enquiries into allegations of ill-treatment by police officers and the use of direct coercive force. ZARA is one of seven members of the Investigation and Complaints Office Advisory Board, an independent body that accompanies, advises and monitors the work of the office.

ETHNIC PROFILING

Ethnic profiling (also known as racial profiling) is when the police use criteria such as skin colour, language, presumed or actual ethnicity, religion or citizenship as factors when deciding whether or in what way an official act is to be carried out. This includes, for example, the targeted surveillance of Black people or People of Colour without any concrete suspicion.

DANGEROUS THREAT (GEFÄHRLICHE DROHUNG (§ 107C STGB))

A dangerous threat is a criminal offence. It takes place when a person dangerously threatens another person in order to arouse fear and anxiety in them.

OMBUD FOR EQUAL TREATMENT (GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSANWALTSCHAFT (GAW))

The Ombud for Equal Treatment's staff provides advice, support, and information confidentially and free

of charge. The Ombud for Equal Treatment has an office in Vienna and the capitals of four other states. It deals with discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation in the employment sector. The Ombud for Equal Treatment's team also advises on other areas of life, such as access to shops, housing, education and health.

→ www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at

EQUAL TREATMENT ACT (GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSGESETZ (GIBG))

The Austrian Equal Treatment Act is intended to offer protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious views and beliefs and age in the context of employment. Outside the employment, it protects against discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity or gender.

EQUAL TREATMENT COMMISSION (GLEICHBEHANDLUNGSKOMMISSION (GBK))

The Equal Treatment Commission is a special institution that assists the labour and social courts and the civil courts. The senates are responsible for dealing with all questions related to discrimination covered by the Equal Treatment Act in their particular areas of competence. They are responsible for drafting expert reports on general issues relating to discrimination. In individual cases, they assess potential violations of the provisions of the equal treatment laws. These procedures are free of charge and victims can also be represented by persons of trust. The result of proceedings before the Equal Treatment Commission is a decision that, in contrast to a court ruling, is not legally binding.

HATE CRIMES

Hate crimes are offences motivated by prejudice directed against groups of people or members of such a group. They are explicitly perpetrated because of the victim's (actual or ascribed) membership to a group, such as age, disability, skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex or other identity characteristics. Those affected are not only individuals (directly affected) but whole communities (indirectly affected) who share these same characteristics. Hate crimes target a person's personal identity, which is immutable or fundamental to a person's sense of self-esteem. They send a message to the entire community that they are not equal members of society.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to the way in which different power structures and forms of discrimination intersect and overlap. These forms of discrimination include gender, age, origin, skin colour, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, social status and appearance, among many other categories. We refer to intersectional discrimination when several such discrimination factors affect a person. The intersectional approach has its origins in the US, where Black feminists and theorists increasingly criticised the universal nature of the category of 'woman' from the 1960s onwards. They pointed out that mainstream feminism only took into account the experiences of *white* women* and called for a feminist examination of other forms of oppression.

LETTER OF INTERVENTION (INTERVENTIONS-SCHREIBEN)

A letter of intervention is a non-legal measure that involves written contact with a person, body, institution, organisation or company. In a letter of intervention, grievances, deficiencies, or infringements that the client has experienced are communicated. This is a non-legal measure. ZARA only uses this option at the request of the client.

MEDIATION TALK (KLAGLOSSTELLUNGSGESPRÄCH)

After a guidelines complaint against possible police misconduct (see above), a mediation talk may be arranged. The aim of this talk is to discuss the incident with representatives of the police department and/or the police officer(s) involved along with the complainant, in order to clarify the incident and come to an agreement. If the complainant is satisfied with the course and outcome of the mediation talk, the complaint procedure may be suspended (→ Know your rights – Taking racial discrimination by the police as an example, p. 54).

PROCEDURAL COMPLAINT (MASSNAHMENBESCHWERDE)

The procedural complaint is a legal remedy against possible police misconduct. The complaint must be submitted to the responsible regional administrative court within six weeks.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are mundane comments, questions, and verbal or non-verbal actions that are devaluing or disparaging without necessarily appearing obviously offensive or hostile. Like macroaggressions (insults, as-

saults), microaggressions target specific groups based on characteristics such as skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or other personal characteristics. They can have a negative impact on the mental health and well-being of the person receiving them.

OFFENCE PROSECUTED EX OFFICIO (OFFIZIALDELIKT)

An offence prosecuted ex officio refers to a criminal offence or an offence violating administrative criminal law that is to be prosecuted by the competent authorities ex officio. This means that as soon as a law enforcement authority becomes aware of a possible ex officio offence (e.g. through a report), it is obliged to initiate criminal investigations.

AUSTRIAN PRESS COUNCIL (ÖSTERREICHISCHER PRESSERAT)

The Austrian Press Council is a self-regulatory body of the Austrian print media. It is, for example, responsible for drawing attention to grievances in the press and to counteract them. When media-ethical violations are reported to the Press Council, it may initiate investigations in the course of which it determines whether the publication in question complies with the guidelines laid down in the Code of Honour of the Austrian Press.

→ www.presserat.at

PARTY TO THE CASE (PARTEISTELLUNG)

Being party to an administrative proceeding involves certain rights, including the right to access files, the right to be heard, and the right to be informed about the decision by announcement or delivery of a notification. In administrative criminal proceedings, e.g. if proceedings because of a racial discrimination are initiated in accordance with Article III para. 1 line 3 of the Introductory Act to the Administrative Procedure Acts, the person affected is not a party to the case and is not informed about the outcome of the proceedings.

TRIAL SUPPORT (PROZESSBEGLEITUNG)

Trial support is psychosocial or legal support for victims of violent crimes in court proceedings. Relatives of victims are also entitled to trial support. Note: since 2021, ZARA has been offering psychosocial trial support for victims of online hate speech offences. The ZARA representatives can provide information free of charge about court procedures, accompany them to the police and support them in court proceedings.

QUALIFIED INSULT (QUALIFIZIERTE BELEIDIGUNG (§115 IVM 117 117))

A qualified insult is deemed to exist if the criminal act against the injured party is committed because of their religious affiliation, ethnic or national affiliation, language, skin colour or nationality – irrespective of whether the characteristics mentioned exist or are attributed to the insulted person. Qualified insults consist of maltreatment, threat of maltreatment or insult or ridicule likely to cause contempt or disparagement of the injured person in the eyes of the public. In order to be a prosecutable offence, it must take place in front of at least three other people (in addition to the perpetrator and the person affected).

RACIAL PROFILING

See → Ethnic profiling

GUIDELINES COMPLAINT (RICHTLINIENBESCHWERDE)

This complaint procedure is one method to have the behaviour of police officers reviewed by the competent supervisory body and then, if necessary, by the responsible regional administrative court. The criteria for the review are the guidelines laid down in the Directive for Interventions by Members of the Public Security Services.

DIRECTIVE FOR INTERVENTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SECURITY SERVICES (RICHTLINIEN-VERORDNUNG (RLV))

This directive contains a number of regulations that law enforcement officers must adhere to in the course of official acts. Among other things, police officers are obliged to refrain from discriminatory behaviour, to disclose their official identification number upon request, and to use the German polite form of address 'Sie'.

EXPOSITION OF THE FACTS (SACHVERHALTSDARSTELLUNG)

An 'exposition of the facts' enables lawyers to check whether a certain act falls under a criminal offence. When drafting a statement of facts, everything must be truthfully reproduced.

SECONDARY VICTIMISATION (SEKUNDÄRE VIKTIMISIERUNG)

Secondary victimisation is when people who experience, for example, a racist assault are unjustifiably held responsible for their situation/the incident itself. Rejection, denial, non-acceptance of the incident or re-injury by the executive (e.g. police/public prosecutor's office)

can also cause secondary victimisation. Likewise, a repeated encounter with the perpetrator can also be perceived as degrading and victimising.

SILENCING

Silencing is defined as making people silent and showing them that their opinions are unwanted through various means. This phenomenon leads to people withdrawing from social discourses both online and offline, which in turn leads to reduced diversity of opinion.

SECURITY POLICE ACT (SICHERHEITSPOLIZEIGESSETZ (SPG))

The Security Police Act regulates the organisation of the security administration and the maintenance of public peace, order and security in Austria.

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE (STAATSANWALTSCHAFT (STAW))

The public prosecutor's office is responsible for criminal prosecution and enforcement and is thus part of the executive branch. It is also known as the prosecuting authority.

SYMBOLS ACT (SYMBOLE-GESETZ)

The Symbols Act is an Austrian federal law prohibiting the public use of symbols of the particular groups mentioned in the law.

TRUSTED PARTNER/PRIORITY FLAGGER

Depending on the social network, this refers to the status that networks assign to trustworthy organisations. When these partner organisations report problematic and/or illegal content to the social network, their reports are prioritised and investigated more thoroughly. Among other things, this leads to faster responses and higher deletion rates on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube.

PROHIBITION ACT (VERBOTSGESETZ)

The Prohibition Act prohibits various acts associated with National Socialism (e.g. National Socialist radicalisation). Furthermore, it prohibits one to deny, grossly trivialise, approve or justify the National Socialist genocide or other National Socialist crimes against humanity.

INCITEMENT TO HATRED (VERHETZUNG (§ 283 STGB))

The offence of incitement to hatred is committed when there is an incitement to violence or hatred against certain protected groups or their members. Furthermore,

anyone who insults a protected group or a member of this group because of his or her belonging to the group may be liable to prosecution. The protected group of people includes (socially constructed) groups as well as individual members of such groups that are defined according to the presence or absence of certain criteria. With regard to racist incidents, this includes people or groups of people defined by the (ascribed or actual) presence or absence of the criteria of skin colour, language, religion, nationality, descent and national or ethnic origin.

REFERRAL SYSTEM (VERWEISSYSTEM)

The referral system refers to the cooperation of various contact points that offer support to those affected by offences motivated by prejudice. These contact points refer their clients to the relevant specialised agencies in order to enable them to access victim-centred and target group-specific support services. Such a system helps those affected avoid repeating the experience and consequently becoming retraumatised.

OMBUDS OFFICE

The Ombuds Office is a national human rights institution that has the task of investigating suspected maladministration. These abuses can also include the incorrect implementation of human rights requirements. It can make concrete recommendations to administrative authorities to correct these errors or redress their negative effects.

→ volksanwaltschaft.gv.at/

VIENNA ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT (WIENER ANTI-DISKRIMINIERUNGSGESETZ)

The Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination against people by civil servants and by contract staff of the city of Vienna on the grounds of ethnicity, religious beliefs, world view, a disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender, and on the grounds of pregnancy or parenthood in particular. The scope of this law includes certain areas of the sovereign administration and the administration delegated to the private sector (e.g. social affairs, health, education) of the state and the city of Vienna, insofar as the cases fall within the regulatory competence of the state.



MELDESTELLE
gegen sexuelle
Missbrauchsdarstellungen
Minderjähriger
und nationalsozialistische
Wiederbetätigung im Internet

Eingegangene Meldungen
1998 - 2024: ~ 317.600

Tatsächlich illegale Inhalte
1998 - 2024: ~ 62.300

Eine Initiative der

ispa
Internet Service Providers Austria

ZARA gives thanks for 25 years of support and collaboration

The year 2024 was a special one for ZARA – we celebrated our 25th anniversary. We used the occasion not only to celebrate our successes, but also to reflect on how we were able to develop into the organisation we are today.

This once again reminded us that our community is our greatest strength. We therefore want to extend a special thanks to...



... all guest authors and interview partners.

You have deeply enriched the 2024 Racism Report with your articles.



... all partners.

You give us strength – and some of you have been supporting us for many years.



... all reporters.

Only by becoming active can we document the extent of racism in Austria.



... all companies and public institutions.

You believe in our mission and support us in implementing it.



... all our supporting partners and donors.

You significantly support our work and make it possible for those affected by racism to continue to receive free support and counselling.

Anti-racism work remains challenging, where we can only ever tackle a fraction of the what needs to be done due to a lack of resources. But we won't give up!

With the slogan 'United Against Hate', we continue to forge alliances to fight racism with our collective strength.

Your ZARA editorial team

Join us!

By donating to ZARA, you can also take a stand against racism and hate online.

[DONATE ONLINE NOW](#)





Allgemeine Erklärung der Menschenrechte

Artikel 1: Alle Menschen sind frei und
gleich an Würde und Rechten geboren.

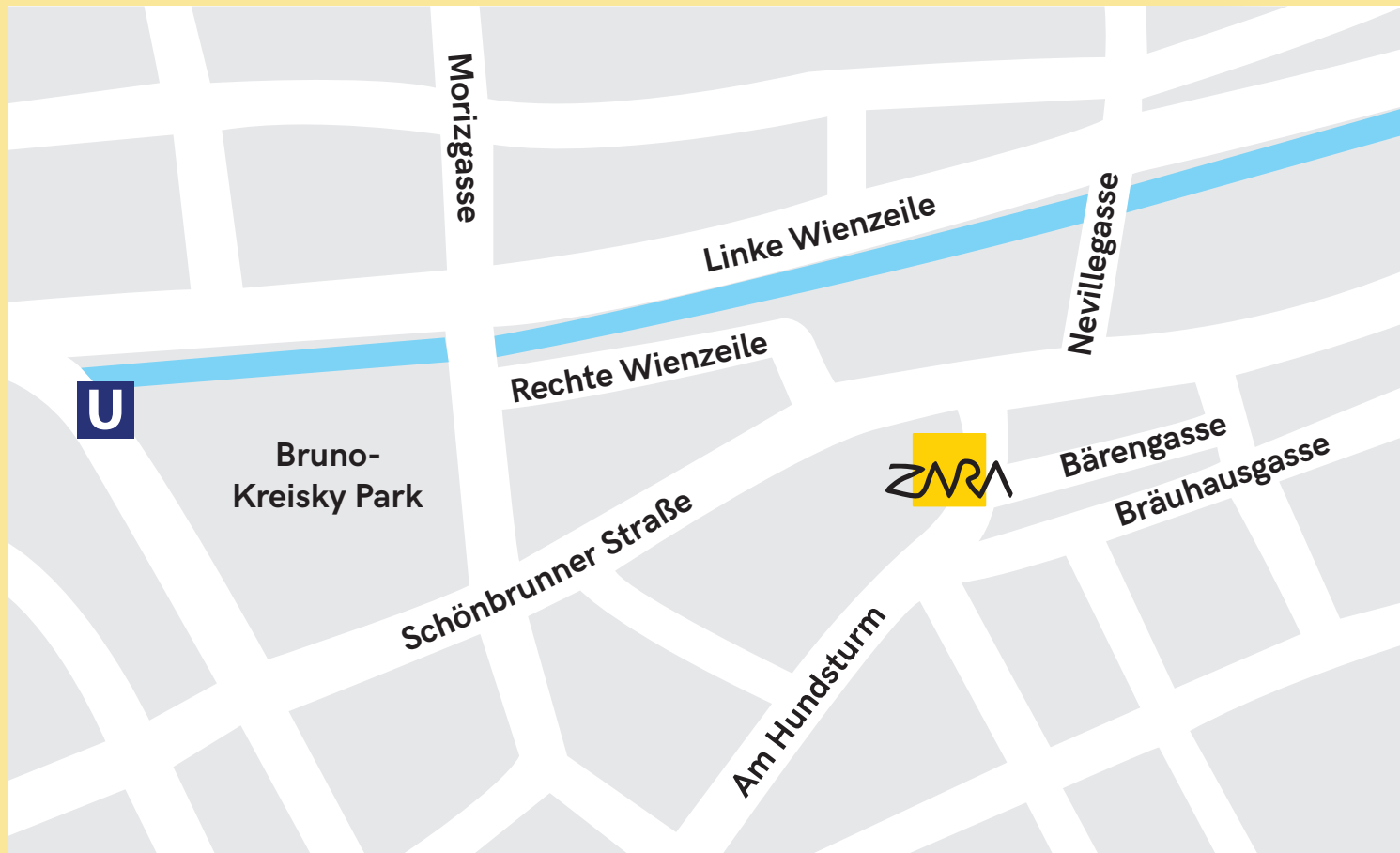
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#ganzich






HIER BIN ICH MENSCH
HIER KAUF ICH EIN



The ZARA counselling team is
available for appointments at:


 Schönbrunner Straße 119/13
Entrance: Am Hundsturm 7
1050 Wien

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 instagram.com/zara.zivilcourage

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