



Der Menschenrechtsbeirat
der Stadt Graz

2024 Human Rights Report of the City of Graz

According to the decision of the Human Rights Advisory Board of 8 October 2024

Legal Information

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Foreword by Mayor Elke Kahr

Dear readers,

The term "accessibility" is associated with the mission to provide physical accessibility for all people, at least in public and semi-public spaces, in and to public transport, etc. This should be the standard today. Communication barriers are less in focus: inclusion in the sense of linguistic comprehensibility and the non-discriminatory use of infrastructure and services. This concerns language acquisition for people from other countries, support for interpreting services, the publication of multilingual information material or assistance with German language courses. But it also affects the way we communicate: As much as is undoubtedly gained from digitalization (keyword "digital office") through simplified and more efficient processes, there is also a risk that certain groups of people will be "left behind" by these innovations, that new barriers will be erected for them by requiring digital skills. The fact that no city services are offered exclusively online is one of the important decisions made in this context. As digitalization develops and advances, this must be carefully monitored, and a finely tuned safety net must be put in place. On the one hand, services must ensure that people who are not (yet) internet and smartphone adept can acquire the necessary skills to be able to navigate the digital space well in the future. On the other hand, analogue channels must remain fully open to all those who cannot or do not want to do this – such channels must not be rationalised away or gradually phased out.

The Human Rights Report, now in its 17th year, once again highlights human rights and how they can be realised and improved in the city of Graz. In particular, the recommendations of the Human Rights Advisory Board are evaluated together with the departments and divisions of the city administration with regard to their implementation; a task for which I would like to thank all those involved. Organised and coordinated in the reliable manner we have come to expect from the ETC - European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and, in particular, from Klaus Starl and Livia Perschy, the Human Rights Report is an important benchmark and guide for human rights work in the City of Peace and Human Rights Graz.

Instead of a portrait photo, I have chosen one in the group as an illustration: It shows members of the editorial team of "Kenne Deine Rechte", the youth project of the Human Rights Advisory Board, on the occasion of the certificate award ceremony on 17 September 2024 in the stairwell of the town hall in front of the plaque of the "Graz Declaration of Human Rights", which was recently placed there at the suggestion of the committed human rights and international law professor Wolfgang Benedek.



Foreword by the Chair

Dear Sir or Madam!

Dear readers!

The coexistence of different population groups in a city, of people with very different views, needs, feelings, and fears, cannot be seen without the supra-regional state and geopolitical background and the media coverage. However, if we allow ourselves to be overly influenced by reports of current wars, conflicts and human rights violations despising life, there is a danger of becoming overwhelmed by discouragement; and the often-cited impression that human rights are currently under pressure arises.

But weren't they always? Most of the steps taken to enforce and refine human rights were met with opposition. Only persistence, often moral courage, but above all a willingness to engage in dialogue, have ensured that these steps could be taken. And it is precisely these virtues that are crucial to the continued enforcement and development of human rights.

However, human rights are not an end in themselves, as they aim to achieve a prosperous, humane coexistence. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a critical and even self-critical approach to guarantee that human rights are not exploited by individuals or groups as egotistical rights.

Although the supra-regional situation of human rights must not be ignored and the Human Rights Advisory Board must take a clear stand against the disregard of these rights, the focus of the work of the Human Rights Advisory Board of Graz is on the observance of human rights in our city.

In this context, the city's annual human rights report is not only a record of the current human rights situation in Graz, but also a "signpost" and report on achievements, and thus a document of the developmental steps associated with the goals of a human rights city.

As the previous human rights report provided a comprehensive description of the human rights situation, for which the Human Rights Advisory Board formulated a set of recommendations, the report at hand is once again an evaluation report. It presents the measures taken by the city government and administration, as well as the implementation of the recommendations based on the topics of *digital city*, *promoting communication and multilingualism*, *domestic violence*, *measures to promote the social participation of children and youth*, and *measures to combat racism*.

Evaluation, as understood by the Human Rights Advisory Board, does not mean scrutiny. Rather, it is a dialogue-based, cooperative process in partnership with the city administration and the "House Graz" comprising the Holding Graz and all other direct or indirect municipal investments or participations, intending to take greater account of human rights aspects. However, it is also proof of the serious efforts of all departments involved to create appropriate structures or make improvements. For this, the Municipal Administration, Director of Municipal Administration Martin Haidvogel and Teresa Riedenbauer, and all the departments involved deserve a great deal of thanks.

After Thomas Heiland was appointed a member of the Human Rights Advisory Board by Mayor Elke Kahr in 2023, we warmly welcomed Hannes Graf, Anna Majcan, Wolfgang Palle, Kavita Sandhu, Daniela Touray, Nora Tödting-Musenbichler and Eva Wenig as new members this year.

We are particularly pleased that Mayor Elke Kahr very often attends our Advisory Board meetings and actively participates, demonstrating her great interest in the work of the Advisory Board. Many thanks for this! Thanks are also to Wolfgang Wehap, who acts as the permanent bridge to the mayor's office.

For the preparation of the 2024 Human Rights Report, special thanks go to all those who contributed to it, the members of the 2024 Human Rights Report working group, all those who provided contributions, but above all to our Secretariat, the ETC team, Livia Perschy and Alexandra Stocker under the direction of Klaus Starl, who coordinated and documented our activities throughout the year.

The Chair of the Human Rights Advisory Board Graz

Max Aufischer and Elke Lujansky-Lammer

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1 Introduction

With this year's 2024 Human Rights Report, the Human Rights Advisory Board of the city of Graz presents the 17th report on the human rights situation in Graz. The compilation of the report was entrusted to a working group of three advisory board members in cooperation with the Secretariat, the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy - ETC Graz. The 2024 Human Rights Report is an evaluation report of the current state of the implementation of the recommendations from the previous year's report. The corresponding statements of the municipal departments, political officers, and institutions that were consulted are reproduced. A comprehensive review of the human rights situation in the city of Graz will again be provided in the next human rights report.

1.1 Goals

The 2024 Human Rights Report pursues the following objectives:

- The Human Rights City Graz is informed about the human rights situation.
- The Report analyses the current state of implementation of the recommendations of the previous year's report.

1.2 Method and Structure of the Report

The 2024 Human Rights Report for the city of Graz is an implementation report based on the recommendations of the 2023 human rights report. To determine the current progress made in implementing these recommendations, requests with specific guiding questions were developed for each recommendation. These requests were sent in writing to the relevant municipal departments, political representatives, and institutions. All the contacted parties submitted a contribution. Therefore, the report contains the responses of the contacted parties. The content of the answers has not been changed, only grammatically and stylistically adapted to ensure the text coherence and, thus, a good reading flow.

1.3 Working Group and Thanks

The working group "2024 Human Rights Report" consisted of the Advisory Board members (in alphabetical order) Max Aufischer, Elke Lujansky-Lammer, and Michael Schwanda, as well as Livia Perschy and Alexandra Stocker for the Secretariat. Klaus Starl chaired the working group. Livia Perschy coordinated and compiled the Report.

Special thanks go to the municipal departments, political representatives, and institutions for their contributions. They all promoted and actively supported the creation of the report.

Graz, October 2024

2 Overview

This year's Human Rights Report serves to evaluate the recommendations made to the city government and municipal council in last year's report. The five recommendations cover a wide range of social issues and fields of action in urban policy. Areas as diverse as e-governance, domestic violence, political participation of children and youth, city measures against racism, and linguistic diversity in the city were addressed. In its evaluation report, the Human Rights Advisory Board reviews the implementation of the recommendations using the 2001 Graz Declaration as a Human Rights City and the assessment scheme for economic and social rights (4A scheme), which was further developed for various areas within the framework of the human rights reports of Graz and is internationally recognised.

The first recommendation addresses access to e-government. Digital services are based on human rights principles, as analysed in detail in the 2023 report. Non-discriminatory access is guaranteed by the availability of analogue alternatives (analogue inclusion) and by support services in district centres, senior citizens' offices, city libraries, and the Citizens' Office. Operating aids and partially multilingual services are currently being developed and expanded.

The second recommendation covers six different aspects of how the municipal authorities deal with the multilingualism of the population. The evaluation included cultural offerings, social services, health services, and services of the Citizen's Office, elementary and primary education, as well as the areas of integration, information, and communication. The Human Rights Advisory Board has identified an imbalance in availability, access, and quality between the municipal fields of action considered and the responsible authorities. In particular, the Human Rights Advisory Board misses a systematic approach to the internationality of the urban population, including students and the international workforce. This becomes even more remarkable when tourism, as a focus of interest in urban policy, is also taken into consideration. It is observed that in various departments and in the area of services guaranteed by fundamental rights, dealing with parties, in particular with regard to access to the respective service, is left to the discretion and initiative of individual administrative staff. The individual language and cultural knowledge of employees close gaps, without it being ensured that the professional and linguistic qualifications do in fact exist. In addition, the way parties are treated is completely inconsistent; except for the requirement for official languages in the registry office, no corresponding standards were reported. In some cases, needs assessments are carried out, in others, they are lacking, and it is reported without a data basis that English courses cover the necessary further training. In the field of education, reference is made to the Education Board of the federal state of Styria, but the guarantee of the right to education is not addressed. However, but seemingly completely independently, the International Language Centre works closely with the city to promote a culture of multilingualism, the communications department of the city tries to collect specific data in cooperation with the language communities, and the cultural department of the city makes its offers linguistically accessible to as many people as possible.

Therefore, the Human Rights Advisory Board strongly recommends that the city of Graz develop and implement a comprehensive diversity strategy for the areas of municipal services and human resources development. The measures in the areas of culture and communication are indicative in this regard.

The third recommendation aims at measures against domestic violence and thus the local and concrete implementation of the Istanbul Convention against gender-based violence. The city

of Graz, with the financial support of the federal government, is working together with women's shelters to implement the project "City districts without partner violence".

Despite the large number of reported activities, projects, and participation initiatives, the participation of children and youths only meets the recommendation of the Human Rights Advisory Board to a limited extent. In its recommendation, the Human Rights Advisory Board states that city policy and city administration must listen to children without reservation and without bias in order to take appropriate action. In most cases, the possibilities are limited to a restricted co-determination in their own everyday affairs and to expressing their opinions on externally determined measures. They rarely have a say in the topics discussed and the decision-making process.

The fifth recommendation calls for the development of an action plan against racism. The programme of the previous government was evaluated and a new one for the period 2024 to 2026 was developed by the mayor's office in collaboration with the Migrants' Advisory Board and the Human Rights Advisory Board. Despite the recognition of the importance of a racism-critical attitude in politics, the action plan remains a collection of measures, often without a critique of racism and without a strategic orientation.

"The City of Graz, especially the members of the city council and of the city government, shall be guided in their actions by the principles of international human rights. Thereby the residents of the city, especially the youth, shall be informed about the established codes of human rights and about the rights and obligations derived therefrom.

It is an objective, especially with regard to those who bear duties in public institutions, organisations and associations to respect and fulfill the human rights relevant standards in the daily life of the city. Deficits in the field of human rights are to be detected at all levels of society to respond appropriately. Thereby human rights shall play a major role in the guidelines and decisions for the future development of the City of Graz. With this declaration and with the aims and code of practice associated therewith, the City of Graz as the European Cultural Capital 2003 expresses its understanding of culture and human dignity."

1. The municipal council and the city government can be said to be guided by human rights without reservation with regard to recommendations one and three, and to a large extent with regard to recommendations four and five. The way in which the heterogeneity and diversity of society and the associated multilingualism are dealt with is very uneven. No systematic approach derived from the principle of the rule of law can be discerned.

2. The information on rights and duties, particularly of youth, can be found in the selected topics, especially in recommendations one, three, and five. Recommendation four specifically addresses the participation of children and youth, where a series of the most diverse possibilities for youth activities and youth participation are reported. To what extent these offerings explicitly refer to human rights cannot be determined in this context.

3. The involvement of corporate entities, organisations, and associations in the implementation of human rights is identified in the implementation of recommendations two, four, and five in the sense of diversification of services. The measures to combat domestic violence in recommendation three correspond to a multi-stakeholder approach in the implementation of human rights.

4. The present Human Rights Report is intended, as required by the Declaration, to identify existing deficits and to promote human rights as guidelines for their solution.

5. In particular, the implementation of recommendation five is an action plan that is carried out in cooperation with international and European institutions and as part of the city's membership of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism.

3 Implementation of the Recommendations

3.1 Recommendation 1 – The Digital City

The directive "Digital Agenda Graz" as a strategic, legal, and technical starting point for advancing digitalization and future projects in the city already meets high human rights standards.

a) To avoid potential discriminatory effects of digitalization and a lack of access to digital services, the Human Rights Advisory Board of the city of Graz recommends implementing digital educational measures as part of a strategy to promote media and information literacy.

The **Mayor's Office** reports that extensive support is offered in various district centres, particularly for senior citizens, to promote media and information literacy and, in particular, to improve access to digital services.¹ You don't have to be a senior citizen to take advantage of the services offered at the district centres. No one interested in the services is turned away.²

Strategic IT Management and the Department for Innovation and Law of the city of Graz report that the city of Graz wants to familiarise its citizens with handling the digital world and encourage them to use smartphones, PCs, laptops, and tablets for their own individual and self-determined purposes in their everyday lives. When used correctly, digital services can actually help and make everyday life easier. As part of the "Digital Participation for Seniors" project, the Seniors' Office offers appointments where support is provided and all questions relating to digital devices can be asked. The Graz City Libraries also promote media literacy. For example, targeted workshops are offered on the topic of "ID Austria and the Digital Office". As of recently, ID Austria (digital ID card and electronic signature) has been offered at all service centres of the city of Graz (previously only at the passport and documentation service). Here, too, support is available for citizens.³

¹ More information on the website of the city of Graz at

https://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10414888/7762292/Digitale_Teilhabe_fuer_Seniorinnen.html

² Mayor's Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

³ Strategic IT Management and Department for Innovation and Law of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

b) As an additional accompanying measure, the Human Rights Advisory Board of the city of Graz recommends developing and implementing ways to further simplify the use of e-government services for the residents of Graz, such as providing easily understandable and multilingual informational or instructional materials as aids.

The Strategic IT Management and the Department for Innovation and Law of the city of Graz report that the validation process has been simplified so that the e-government forms present fewer hurdles for applicants. This means that the forms may now be tested without any consequences.

In addition, it is noted that some departments are endeavouring to offer multilingual forms. As part of the requirements, options such as the use of an automatic translation service are being examined.⁴

⁴ Strategic IT Management and Department for Innovation and Law of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

c) The Human Rights Advisory Board acknowledges with approval that the authorities responsible for the “Digital City Graz” expressly refrain from offering city services exclusively digitally. The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz continue to provide existing analogue offerings, face-to-face services, and telephone accessibility for city procedures and services.

The **Mayor's Office** reports that the service centres of the city of Graz have been instructed - in contrast to the recent practice of insisting on online appointments - to accept anyone who wishes to make use of the current services. However, the prerequisite for this is that people are prepared to accept any waiting times that may occur.⁵

The Strategic IT Management and the Department for Innovation and Law of the city of Graz report that, following the Digital Agenda, no services of the city of Graz are offered exclusively online. Multi-channel e-governance continues to be pursued, which also includes personal submissions of applications, for example via the service centres of the city of Graz.⁶

⁵ Office of the Mayor, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶ Strategic IT Management and Department for Innovation and Law of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

3.2 Recommendation 2 – Promotion of Communication and Multilingualism

a) Arts and Culture: The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz equip Graz's museums with appropriate facilities to accommodate the linguistic diversity prevalent in the city.

The **Graz City Museum** reports that all of the Graz Museum's information materials are available in German and English. The Graz Museum is gradually expanding the range of services in plain language, both in exhibition texts and special educational formats. The target groups are people with disabilities and people with little knowledge of German. In general, multilingual offers require both human resources and additional budgetary expenditure for translation, speaking, and recording services. These are the greatest challenges in implementing this recommendation.⁷

Guided tours with interpretation

The Integration Office of the city of Graz funds guided tours with interpretation at the Graz Museum, which the Austrian Integration Fund organises. In 2024, the languages interpreted were Arabic, Dari/Farsi and Ukrainian.

As part of the language festival around the European Day of Languages, organised by the Graz Language Network at the Graz Museum, guided tours with interpretation are free. The possible languages in 2024 were: English, French, Italian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Russian, as well as written interpretation. The tours, which are aimed at school classes, were fully booked in 2024. The programme is a cooperation with the Institute for Theoretical and Applied Translation Studies at the University of Graz.⁸

Audio devices with different audio tracks

For the exhibition at the Graz Museum Schlossberg, audio guide devices are available free of charge with currently five audio tracks: a German language track, a track in plain language, a descriptive track for blind and visually impaired people, a track in plain English and, since July 2024, a track in Italian. All audio tracks and the transcripts are also freely accessible via the Graz Museum website. The audio guides are in high demand. Further audio tracks in languages frequently spoken in Graz (including Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish) are planned for the upcoming exhibitions on the topic of "City and Democracy" in 2025.⁹

Inclusion and networks

The Graz Museum continues to seek to expand inclusive offers. The educational formats in easy-to-understand language were used by 35 groups in 2024 (as of September 2024). The Graz Museum participates in all activities of the association "Kultur inklusiv" and is involved in the organisation of the association. There were also offers during the "Week of Inclusion" of the city of Graz. As in previous years, the Graz Museum was also the venue for the inclusive

⁷ Graz City Museum, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁸ Graz City Museum, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁹ Graz City Museum, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

dance, culture and theatre festival "InTaKT" in 2024 and is represented with its own programme item in the festival.¹⁰

Educational formats

In addition to themed guided tours on the history of migration, gender history or National Socialism, the Graz Museum has offered the themed guided tour "Democracy and Human Rights in Graz" for pupils at secondary school levels I and II as standard since 2024.

The workshop "Kinderrechte finden Stadt" (Children's Rights in the City), which was conceived and carried out together with "beteiligung.st", will be held for the first time in the week around the International Day of Children's Rights and in the week around the Human Rights Day on a total of ten dates at the Graz Museum. Despite the increased personnel and time requirements for the three-and-a-half-hour format, the workshop is offered at the regular guided tour price with free admission for the pupils, so as not to exclude school classes by charging correspondingly higher costs.

The public guided tour "Antisemitism in Graz", conceived and carried out together with "Granatapfel Kulturvermittlung", was offered on around ten Sunday slots in 2024.¹¹

¹⁰ Stadtmuseum Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

¹¹ Stadtmuseum Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

b) Social Services, Healthcare, and Citizen's Office: The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz ensure that the linguistic accessibility and availability of services in the areas of social services, healthcare, and the Citizen's Office are maximised, which means ensuring adequate language-proficient staff or interpreter services.

Social Welfare Office of the city of Graz

The **Social Welfare Office of the city of Graz** does not see any challenges in implementing this recommendation. The need for language support always arises in the context of concrete interaction with citizens. Then the employees act accordingly. For more than five years, there has been a contract with an interpreting service. All offices are equipped with the appropriate devices that make video interpreting possible. This option is used regularly. Furthermore, there is regular cooperation with the Integration Office of the city of Graz, which has an interpreting pool from which the Social Welfare Office can also claim a certain number of hours. In addition, the information sheet for social assistance has been translated into eight languages (Arabic, Bosnian, English, Farsi, Croatian, Russian, Serbian and Turkish).¹²

There is a feedback form on the website of the Social Welfare Office¹³ in the second place in the quick links section. Citizens can use this form to submit feedback. The submitted feedback is analysed quarterly.¹⁴

Employees with a non-German first language do not need any training programmes or further training measures to improve their language skills. The "Haus Graz"-Academy regularly offers English courses, but English cannot be used in all cases. However, the Social Welfare Office has employees who speak Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Romanian, Turkish, Dari, Farsi, Albanian and Arabic as additional resources to English and French if needed.¹⁵

Health Department of the city of Graz

The **Health Department of the city of Graz** reports that employees and citizens are offered the opportunity to utilise professional interpreting services if required. The services of SAVD Videodolmetschen GmbH¹⁶ are used for this purpose. The SAVD video interpreting system is used for social work in the health centres of the health department as part of the counselling activities, as it can be switched on if required. In the health hub "Gesundheitsdrehscheibe", SAVD video interpreting is used very frequently in open counselling, such as community nursing, physiotherapy, and social work. Counselling by telephone is part of the daily counselling and care work of all professions in the health hub. The offer of psychotherapy in a personal conversation is regularly realised with interpreters present.

In cooperation with the Integration Office of the city of Graz, attention is paid to quality assurance when arranging services to overcome language barriers.¹⁷

¹² Social Welfare Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

¹³ More information at <https://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10018736/7761766/Sozialamt.html>

¹⁴ Social Welfare Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

¹⁵ Social Welfare Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

¹⁶ You can find more information about SAVD Videodolmetschen GmbH on the website <https://www.savd.at/>

¹⁷ Health Department of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

The Health Department lists costs as the biggest challenge in implementing this recommendation. One way of simplifying complex language is to make brochures and online information easier to read. There is software that can help with this, but it is extremely expensive and time-consuming to use. Overall, linguistic mediation and simplification require significant budgetary investments. Being aware of the massive cost development caused by professional linguistic mediation, the planning of the respective costs is part of the annual budget planning to be able to continue providing these services.¹⁸

There are no regular surveys or feedback options for citizens to assess their needs and satisfaction with the linguistic accessibility and availability of the Health Department's services. In the health hub "Gesundheitsdrehscheibe", the need for language support arises from daily encounters in the open consultation, which takes place every Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. without prior appointment. The services offered by the "Gesundheitsdrehscheibe" are very accessible and are characterised by the fact that, where possible, health care is provided quickly and that the linguistic context can also be taken into account spontaneously. There are no training programmes or further education measures for employees to improve their language skills.¹⁹

Citizens' Office of the city of Graz

In its contribution, the **Citizens' Office of the city of Graz** primarily refers to the civil registry office. The statements made are generally valid for all of the Office's activities which are almost exclusively sovereign.

The Graz civil registry office is the largest of its kind in Austria. Dealing with documents and certificates in foreign languages is part of the office's daily routine. The office reports that, as a general rule, official acts at the civil registry office (the registry office and citizenship department) are conducted in German, which is the official language, and must also be documented in German for traceability and the duty to provide guidance.

There is no assessment of the demand for language support as such, because all the languages of the world would have to be covered. A regular enquiry about needs is not considered target-oriented, because it is assumed that each party prefers their own mother tongue. However, in order to ensure that the processing of the case is traceable, a kind of working translation would have to be documented in writing for each foreign-language conversation to ensure traceability.

However, the parties are encouraged to bring someone to provide language support, especially since the marriage applications do not have to be made within a few days. So, the question arises as to when and for which applications there is an urgency and when this falls under the parties' duty to cooperate.²⁰

The association OMEGA, which ceased its services at the beginning of 2024, has been providing language services, in particular for the registry of newborns, since mid-2017. The registry of newborns is subject to legal deadlines (giving first names, registration, etc.). This means that it is particularly important to process the applications quickly.

¹⁸ Health Department of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

¹⁹ Health Department of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

²⁰ Citizens' Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

The quota of available language service hours was reduced annually due to a lack of demand. The following table shows the usage over the last few years:²¹

Year	Hours utilised
2020	12.25
2021	10.75
2022	0
2023	14.18
2024	4.2 (as at: August 2024)

Table 1: Overview of the hours of language services used from 2020 to August 2024 (Source: Citizens' Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report).

In 2023, for example, around 300 asylum-related births were documented. With a potential of 300 opportunities to utilise language services, 14 hours were required. On average, two hours of service are charged for an application. This in turn leads to the conclusion that this service was utilised for seven out of 300 applications. As the need for interpreting services is limited, the cost-benefit factor must also be considered. The administrative effort required for the small number of uses is also not inconsiderable. There are currently no special contracts or cooperations with interpreting providers, as OMEGA has discontinued its services and demand has declined. The current rule is that the parties bring "a person for linguistic support" to the office, who also acts as a confidant during the official proceedings. In addition, several multilingual employees at the office provide short-term support, if necessary, when it comes to clarifying procedures for filing an application.²²

It should also be noted that most of the tasks in the Citizens' Office fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, which means, among other things, that the federal government is the legislator. Thus, a stand-alone solution for the Graz civil registry office would not make sense. However, so-called federal agencies for care and support services (Bundesagenturen für Betreuungs- und Unterstützungsleistungen)²³ have been created and also offer interpreting and translation services.²⁴

Regarding the existing challenges in implementing the stated recommendation, the Citizens' Office of the city of Graz, on the one hand, cites the cost-benefit factor already described. On the other hand, the Office explains that even if everything were to be written in English, not all employees are proficient in the language. Overall, dealing with foreign-language speakers in the Citizens' Office appears to be an everyday occurrence and not particularly problematic for all parties involved.

The project "Einfache Sprache" (plain language) is cited as a way of improving the linguistic accessibility and availability of services at the Citizens' Office of Graz. This project postulates plain language on the website as well as in the forms and was implemented in 2023. In addition,

²¹ Citizens' Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.
²² Citizens' Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.
²³ More information at <https://www.bbu.gv.at/was-wir-tun#uebersetzungsleistung>
²⁴ Citizens' Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

the City of Graz Advisory Board for People with Disabilities also launched the project “Invitation to the Office”.

The Citizens’ Office reports that the “Haus Graz”-Academy offers employees opportunities to improve their language skills.²⁵

Service Centres of the city of Graz

The **Service Centres of the city of Graz** currently have no challenges in implementing this recommendation. At the Service Centres, simple, low-threshold services are provided as part of a one-stop shop. The employees can easily communicate with citizens in German or English. The use of interpreting services is not necessary. Therefore, there are no special contracts or cooperation agreements with interpreting services. If necessary, digital translation aids are used by the parties or employees for support.²⁶

The need for language support is not assessed at the Service Centres of the city of Graz. No measures have been taken so far to improve the linguistic accessibility and availability of services provided by the Service Centres, nor are any such measures planned.

Generally, a customer survey is conducted at the Service Centres every three years. There is no question about linguistic accessibility and availability.

However, there are regular network meetings of citizen service centres where language challenges are frequently discussed. An English workshop that is tailored to the specific services provided by the Service Centres is currently in evaluation.²⁷

Strategic Human Resources Development Department of the city of Graz

Regarding existing training programmes or education measures for employees to improve their language skills, the **Strategic Human Resources Development Department of the city of Graz** reports that the education programme of the Department is aimed at all employees of the “Haus Graz”. In addition, (subject-specific) further training is provided in the departments as needed. An overview of the internal departmental offers is currently not available to the Strategic Personnel Development Department, so no statement can be made about possible additional language qualification offers. For executives and project managers, there is a training offer in English with a native speaker.²⁸

In addition, the Strategic Human Resources Development Department of the city of Graz has been pursuing the goal of ensuring that the offers and services can be understood by as many citizens as possible with its initiative “GRAZ VERSTÄNDLICH” (Graz Understandable) for almost ten years. This applies to all language levels of citizens, whether their first language is German or another language. Translations using online tools are also easier to accomplish with a fresh and modern writing style than with long texts in an official style.

The “Haus Graz”-Academy programme offers several rounds of “GRAZ VERSTÄNDLICH” every year. Likewise, “GRAZ VERSTÄNDLICH” is anchored in the service examination training course and is part of the welcome folder for new employees. In addition, there are multipliers

²⁵ Citizens’ Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

²⁶ Service Centres of the city of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

²⁷ Service Centres of the city of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

²⁸ Strategic Human Resources Development Department of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

in the departments who are available to provide their colleagues with advice and support on how to write in a way that is easy to understand.²⁹

²⁹ Strategic Human Resources Development Department of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

c) Education:

- i. The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz expand native language instruction in Graz's elementary schools.
 - ii. The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz promote more interpretations of Austrian Sign Language throughout the education sector.
 - iii. The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz provide interpretation services in Romani in Graz's elementary schools.
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The **Department for Education and Integration of the city of Graz** reports that the City of Graz is not responsible for organising first language teaching, but rather the Styrian Directorate for Education.³⁰

The **Department for Education and Integration of the city of Graz** reports that the City of Graz is not responsible for interpreting for Austrian Sign Language in schools, but rather the Styrian Directorate for Education.

Interpreting services for Austrian Sign Language are not provided as standard in children's educational and childcare institutions. In this context, the City of Graz's Department of Education and Integration refers to the federal state of Styria's special needs kindergarten and crèche for children with hearing impairments³¹ and the Styrian federal state's early hearing support and advice centre.^{32,33}

The **Department for Education and Integration of the City of Graz** reports that schools can apply to the federal state of Styria (A6 Education and Society) for interpreting services in various languages. However, the Department is not aware of the extent to which interpreting services in Romani are available and in demand. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the Integration Office of the city of Graz supports the project "Chavore"³⁴, which supports the integration and care of Roma children in educational institutions in Graz and their family environment.³⁵

³⁰ Department of Education and Integration of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

³¹ More information at <https://www.soziales.steiermark.at/cms/ziel/4822957/DE/>.

³² More information at <https://www.soziales.steiermark.at/cms/ziel/162074821/DE/>.

³³ Department of Education and Integration of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

³⁴ More information at <https://www.caritas-steiermark.at/hilfe-angebote/flucht-integration/bildung-arbeit/chavore-schulunterstuetzung-fuer-romakinder>.

³⁵ Department of Education and Integration of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

d) German Courses and German Language Support: The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz expand demand-responsive offerings of German courses or German language support.

The **Integration Office of the city of Graz** reports that the funding landscape in the area of German courses is complex and not very easy to understand. For this reason, the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) in cooperation with the federal state of Styria and the city of Graz launched the project "Startpunkt Deutsch" (Starting point German)³⁶ as a central point of contact and advice for people looking for a German course. The project is implemented by the ÖIF. In accordance with the Integration Act, the ÖIF provides German courses from literacy to language level C1 for persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection as well as for Ukrainian displaced persons. This funding programme is called "Startpaket Deutsch & Integration" (start-up package German & Integration). Since the pandemic, the ÖIF has also been offering an increasing number of online German courses. The Federal Government, the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) and the federal state of Styria also fund German courses and German language support programmes.³⁷

The Integration Office primarily seeks to close gaps in the existing funding landscape and to promote offers in line with the city's needs. These funded offers from the Integration Office are aimed at the following target groups:

- Asylum seekers
- People who are no longer eligible for funding in the start-up package according to the Integration Act
- Adults who want to improve their German skills in open German course formats (communication, everyday language, topic-specific terms, etc.)
- Elderly people
- Women with childcare responsibilities
- Children and young people with a need for German language support³⁸

The Integration Office funds various formats:

- Standard German courses
- German courses with specific focuses (professional qualification, digital literacy, communication, integration knowledge, etc.)
- Tandem and theatre pedagogical formats
- Courses with childcare services
- Part-time courses for people in employment
- Low-threshold and open course formats³⁹

With the support of the Integration Office, a new learning method was also brought to Graz in 2023 and 2024. The Caritas Academy organised a train-the-trainer course for the so-called "Liechtenstein Languages Program"⁴⁰, which teaches alternative approaches to language acquisition. In 2024, the Integration Office is also funding mobility costs for asylum seekers

³⁶ More information at <https://startpunktdeutsch.at/en/information>.

³⁷ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

³⁸ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

³⁹ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁴⁰ More information on Liechtenstein Languages (LieLa) at <https://21.lieLa.li/> and also at <https://www.integration.li/en/education/language#learning-german>

who attend a subsidised German course run by the Integration Office and cannot afford the travel costs.⁴¹

In recent years, the number of offers funded by the Integration Office has increased significantly. In 2024 (as of July 2024), 330 German courses were funded by the Integration Office. In 2023, there were 293 courses. This represents an increase of 12.62%.

The number of places on the funded German courses in 2024 was 1,862 for adults and 2,987 for children and youths. Compared to the figures from 2023, this represents an increase of 17.03% in course places for adults (2023: 1,591 places) and an increase of 16.77% in course places for children and youths (2023: 2,558 places).

No further statement can be made at this time regarding a further expansion in 2025, as the city of Graz has not yet decided on a budget (as of July 2024), so that the funding budget of the Integration Office has not yet been determined.⁴²

Goals and measures of city-led integration efforts

The goals and measures relating to the city-led integration efforts are stipulated in the mission statement "Graz sind wir alle" (Graz is all of us) and the associated work programme of the Integration Office under "language support".⁴³

Goals:

- Promoting and expanding barrier-free and cost-free offers for learning German
- Quality assurance of existing and innovative offers for learning German
- Continuation of networking with other funding bodies and identification of funding gaps
- Recognising, appreciating, and promoting linguistic diversity
- Promoting needs-specific interpreting services

Measures:

- Provision of target group-specific courses and different formats for German language support
- Provision of cost-free offers for play-based German language support for children and youths during the summer holidays
- Complementing the didactics by creating learning materials related to Graz
- Networking with other funding bodies, stakeholders, and institutes offering German courses
- Helping to shape the city of Graz as a city of languages through the Graz Language Network and the Language Festival working group
- Needs-based funding of first-language teaching for children where existing offers are not sufficient
- Continuing and needs-based expansion of the interpreting pool
- Continuing the language support in the Department for Education and Integration-Service⁴⁴

⁴¹ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁴² Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁴³ More information at

https://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10409083/13515997/Das_Integrationsleitbild_fuer_die_Stadt_Graz.html

⁴⁴ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

Identifying current needs

Continued attention is placed on closing gaps in demand within the available resources and ensuring a continuous exchange in the funding landscape. The Integration Office can identify the current demand for German courses and German language support by means of demand reports. The Integration Office receives these from various sources and in various ways: On the one hand, there are requests that are addressed directly to the Integration Office. On the other hand, the needs are reported by the associations working in integration, training institutes, and network and cooperation partners (e.g. Austrian Integration Fund, Startpunkt Deutsch) that are funded by the Integration Office. In addition, the Integration Office can also draw conclusions about the demand situation from the extent to which the courses and offers funded by the Office are booked.⁴⁵

The challenges

Regarding the implementation of this recommendation, the Integration Office of the city of Graz has identified the following challenges:

- Sufficiently closing gaps in the range of services offered with limited financial resources and in view of the many needs in the field of integration in the city of Graz: An increasing need for German language support is particularly evident among children and youths, where no comprehensive offer can be financed.
- Capacity limitations (lack of personnel, rooms, etc.) of providers when expanding (especially if this is to be done at short notice).

The Integration Office also draws attention to challenges for German course participants that need to be considered:

- Availability of sufficient adequate teaching formats for people who do not make any progress in language acquisition through standard teaching
- Reduction of waiting times for German courses, follow-up courses that build on each other as seamlessly as possible, while at the same time being affordable
- Childcare options that enable people to attend a German course⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁴⁶ Integration Office of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

e) Information: The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz expand multilingual informational materials and update them to the most spoken languages or current needs in Graz.

The **Department of Communication** of the city of Graz is taking the following steps to provide multilingual information materials:

- Analysis of the most spoken languages: In close co-operation with the Department for Education and Integration, the Department of Communication regularly carries out an analysis of the most frequently spoken languages in Graz. This database is continuously updated to ensure that the city's communication strategies meet the changing linguistic needs of the population.
- Translation of campaigns: Based on this analysis, relevant city information campaigns are translated into the five to seven most widely spoken languages in Graz. In this way, the city ensures that important information is understandable and accessible for all population groups.
- Dissemination and accessibility: The translated materials are made available both online and in printed form in public institutions such as Service Centres, libraries and health facilities. In addition, the Department of Communication is working on making these materials more easily accessible via digital channels such as the municipal website and social media platforms.⁴⁷

In addition, the website of the city of Graz (graz.at) offers an automatic translation function that allows users to translate content into all common languages. This function facilitates quick access to multilingual information, although it should be noted that the accuracy of such automatic translations may vary for complex texts.

Since 2019, there have also been increased efforts to ensure and continuously improve the accessibility of the graz.at website in accordance with WCAG 2.1 standards in order to reach all users in the best way possible.⁴⁸

The provision and regular updating of multilingual information material poses several challenges for the city of Graz:

- a) Resource requirements: Translating content into multiple languages requires considerable human and financial resources. This includes not only the translation work itself, but also the necessary quality assurance to ensure that the content is accurate and culturally appropriate.
- b) Continuous updating: As information changes frequently, for example due to new legal requirements or current events, these changes must be implemented promptly in all languages. This complicates the process of updating and places high demands on the flexibility and speed of the employees involved.
- c) Quality assurance: A linguistically correct translation is often not enough. The translation must also be understandable and relevant for the target group. This requires close collaboration with native speakers and cultural consultants, which can make the process time-consuming and complex.
- d) Cultural differences: Austria-specific technical terms cannot always be translated into other languages. Witty formulations that are understood in German are often difficult to

⁴⁷ Department of Communication, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁴⁸ Department of Communication, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

translate into other languages because the corresponding equivalents in the target language are missing. This requires careful text design and, if necessary, adjustments to avoid misunderstandings.

- e) Costs of multilingualism: The costs associated with providing multilingual materials are a challenge, especially for smaller departments that run small-scale campaigns. These departments often have to work with limited resources which impedes the implementation of multilingualism.
- f) Feedback from the communities: It would be desirable to receive even more feedback from the communities addressed to further optimise the targeting. This feedback could help to improve the effectiveness of the materials and ensure that the information actually reaches the various population groups.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Department of Communication of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

f) Diversity: The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz promote diversity-orientated image and media work.

The **Department of Communication of the city of Graz** reports that the city of Graz uses several criteria to ensure diversity equity in images and media content:

- Representation: There is a focus on images representing a wide range of ethnic, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds, as well as different age groups, genders, and physical abilities.
- Inclusion and equality: The people depicted should appear in equal and respectful roles. Stereotypical or discriminatory representations are to be avoided.
- Cultural sensitivity: Images and media content must be culturally sensitive and respectful of different traditions and customs. In particular, care should be taken not to make inappropriate use of cultural or religious symbols.⁵⁰

Implementing diversity-conscious image and media work entails several challenges:

- Selecting suitable images: It can be difficult to find suitable images that cover all aspects of diversity without falling back on stereotypical representations. Therefore, access to a comprehensive and diversity-conscious image database is crucial.
- Cultural sensitivity: Ensuring that all images used are culturally sensitive requires a deep understanding of different traditions and customs. Misrepresentations can quickly lead to misunderstandings or criticism.
- Continuous adaptation: Social norms and the understanding of diversity are constantly evolving. This requires continuous review and adaptation of media work in order to stay up to date and meet the needs of the population.⁵¹

There are also collaborations to support diversity-oriented image and media work. One example of this is the project "Graz sind wir alle" (Graz is all of us), which was initiated by the city of Graz in collaboration with the association Xenos, author Joachim Hainzl, and photographer Maryam Mohammadi. This project aims to make the diversity of the people living and working in Graz visible by documenting their stories in words and pictures. This cooperation makes it possible to tell authentic and diverse life stories and, thus, effectively represent the diversity in the city of Graz. The project is financed as part of the EU project "Action".⁵²

In addition, the Department of Communication strongly recommends that care be taken not to highlight individual groups in the visual language of urban campaigns, unless it is necessary for content-related reasons. Every image can convey multiple messages that can be interpreted in different ways. For example, if, in the context of "Für ein besseres Miteinander" (Living Better Together), the misconduct of a person with dark skin is depicted, this could unintentionally reinforce the stereotypical image of "migrants polluting our city". Therefore, it is crucial to approach the visual design with great sensitivity to ensure that all people are addressed without discrediting anyone. In addition, the Department recommends continuing

⁵⁰ Department of Communication of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵¹ Department of Communication of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵² Department of Communication of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

down the path it has taken and making greater use of honours and awards as a way to draw more attention to the aspect of human rights. This applies both to the achievements of those being honoured and to the selection of the dignitaries themselves.⁵³

⁵³ Department of Communication of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

3.3 Recommendation 3 – Domestic violence

The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz join the violence prevention project “StoP - Districts without Partner Violence” in order to pursue the prevention and combating of domestic violence on a smaller scale, thereby more intensively and sustainably.

The **Department of Women & Equality of the city of Graz** reports that the violence prevention project "StoP – City districts without partner violence" is aimed at private organisations. Cities or local authorities cannot become project partners. Therefore, it is not possible for the city of Graz to join the StoP project.⁵⁴

The implementation of Stop projects in Austria has been made possible in recent years by funding from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection; the projects were coordinated, approved, and granted by the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters (ÖAF).

The Department of Women & Equality was also in contact with the ÖAF because of a project location in Graz, however, no federal funds were provided for Graz. The Department of Women & Equality was unable to provide financing alone, with costs ranging from € 70,000 to € 80,000 per year (according to Maria Rösslhumer, then managing director of the ÖAF) and training costs for project staff.⁵⁵

In autumn 2023, it was announced that federal funding for Stop projects would be available again. Together with the Association of Women's Shelters in Styria, which meets all the requirements and qualifications for establishing a project location according to the copyrighted concept, the Department of Women & Equality of the city of Graz has found a project partner for the submission and implementation of the project in Graz. The Federal Ministry and the founder of StoP, Prof. Sabine Stövesand, gave their approval in September 2024. The necessary co-financing of the project by the Department of Women & Equality of the city of Graz has been budgeted.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Department of Women & Equality of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵⁵ Department of Women & Equality of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵⁶ Department of Women & Equality of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

3.4 Recommendation 4 – Measures to Promote the Social Participation of Children and Youths

Children and youths have a right to the city. The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz actively engage with children and young people and open itself to the realization of this right by having the political level sit down with them and negotiate in an unbiased exchange how they can shape their living environment.

The **children of the Children's Parliament in Graz** remember two ideas and suggestions that were implemented as concrete measures: 1. a ban on smoking at playgrounds and 2. conducting a survey in primary schools about school meals in Graz. The children of the children's parliament feel that they can contribute to change. At the same time, however, the children would like to be involved more often and more directly in discussions on topics that affect them. For example, a food survey was sent to parents and not to children. The children would like to be invited to meetings/sessions with city representatives on a regular basis, such as one session per year.

When the children of the Children's Parliament invite individual politicians to a round table on a topic that is relevant to them in the Children's Parliament, for example green space, playgrounds, school meals, etc., they come. This happens about two to three times a year.⁵⁷

The **Department for Youth and Family of the City of Graz** and, in particular, its **Division of Open Children and Youth Work**, places a strong focus on the participation of young people. Various formats offer the opportunity to implement their own projects in a wide range of settings, to come into contact with city politicians and to express their respective views on different topics.⁵⁸

The City for Children and Youth: Children and Youth Survey

The Division of Open Children and Youth Work is leading the city's focus on children and youth, with numerous projects implemented since 2022 and more to come until mid-2027. Around 3,000 young people have cast their votes in the participation process. The children's survey was conducted in the summer of 2022 under the title "Schalt auf laut" (Turn it up loud) and 1,200 children between the ages of five and twelve expressed their ideas about city life. At the beginning of 2023, around 1,600 young people took the opportunity to share their ideas about life in the city through the youth survey "Lass hören" (Let's hear it). The results were clustered during the evaluation and implemented step by step in individual projects.⁵⁹

The City for Children and Youth: Instagram channel and "Talk im Amt – Kinder im Amt" (Talk at the office – children at the office)

As part of the City for Children and Youth, the Instagram channel "junge_stadt graz" has been established with essential information for the target group of 14- to 18-year-olds in Graz. This

⁵⁷ Children's Parliament Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵⁸ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁵⁹ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

communication channel allows for the continuous submission of feedback to the Office or the Division.

Another project from the City for Children and Youth is the “Talk at the Office – Children at the Office”. For this, school classes come to the Department for Youth and Family together with the Children's Office and, in an entertaining “station run”, learn a lot about the possibilities for children to be supported at the Department for Youth and Family when things don't go so well. A particular focus is on children's rights.⁶⁰

Child- and family-friendly city

Furthermore, the audit process for a “child- and family-friendly city” should be mentioned. This three- to five-year cycle represents another opportunity to consider the ideas and opinions of young people. In the last audit process, the results of which were summarised and approved at the city council meeting in July, children were able to contribute their topics in the context of a workshop. This has ensured that individual feedback has been incorporated into the current phase of efforts by politicians and the administration to continuously improve the lives of children and families. The results of the surveys from the focus on children and youth have also been considered.⁶¹

The projects "proAct – Grazer Jugendbudget" (Graz Youth Budget) and "Mitmischen in Graz" (Getting involved in Graz)

The projects "proAct – Graz Youth Budget" and the revised "Getting involved in Graz" are designed for the target group of youths. In the first case, the project enables the direct implementation of young people's own project ideas, while in the second case, young people have the opportunity to come into contact with politicians from the city of Graz and get to know how the city's committees and bodies work.⁶²

Children's Mayor and Children's Parliament

The election of the Children's Mayor and the Children's Parliament is a fixed item on the agenda throughout the year. The topics from the Children's Parliament are repeatedly discussed at various meetings with the administration and politicians. The aim is to work together on solutions and improvements.⁶³

Youth centres in the city of Graz

Youth centres in the city of Graz see themselves as places where all youths in Graz are welcome, regardless of their religious, social or ethnic background. There are also no limits in terms of the identity that individuals have chosen or feel they have. Youth centres could also be described as places of diversity, where young people can turn to for support in their individual lives and get to know other ways of life, and of course approach specialist staff with their concerns and ideas. Mutual understanding and respect are always at the centre of the daily routine in a youth centre. Conflicting and differing positions are discussed and exchanged in accordance with the common attitude. In particular, marginalised groups often engage in a

⁶⁰ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶¹ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶² Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶³ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

discursive exchange about ways of life and attitudes that are less familiar to them for the first time in youth centres.

In general, the youth centres in Graz can be seen as places that serve as a megaphone for young people and, thus, represent a very central and low-threshold offer for formulating youth-oriented needs.⁶⁴

Mobile youth work (MOJA)

Mobile youth work (MOJA) also contributes significantly to the lives of marginalised youths and groups. As a low-threshold, outreach mobile point of contact in public spaces, the aim is to establish contact with youths. At the contact point, youths who find themselves in difficult circumstances can take care of their basic needs. At the same time, individual efforts are made to integrate these youths into existing support and assistance services.⁶⁵

The Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the city of Graz is aware of the necessity of a diverse youth culture that enables low-threshold participation. In the “Youth Strategy 2022 to 2026”, the Division emphasises the need to adapt and expand both the infrastructure and the personnel resources, particularly in mobile youth work, in line with the growing population of Graz. With the construction of the new “Eggenlend Youth Centre” and the financing of the renovation and expansion of the “Login Youth Centre”, two major milestones have already been achieved.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶⁵ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶⁶ Division of Open Children and Youth Work of the City of Graz, contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

3.5 Recommendation 5 – Measures to combat racism

The Human Rights Advisory Board recommends that the city of Graz:

- a) evaluate the existing Ten-Point Plan of Action against Racism.

The evaluation of the existing Action Plan has been commissioned. Klaus Starl (Human Rights Advisory Board) and Heimo Maieritsch (City Administration) conducted interviews with specialist departments on the implementation and success of twelve measures from the 2019-2023 Action Plan between April and August 2024. The final report will be submitted to the Mayor's Office and sent to the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) as part of the planned reporting requirements.⁶⁷

- b) develop, approve, and implement a new Ten-Point Plan of Action for the period 2024-2026 based on the approach proposed by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) and taking into account the city's Integration Guideline of 2023.

The draft of an Action Plan for 2024-2026 comprising of 45 measures was presented to Mayor Kahr on 16 September 2024. The measures were developed using the method proposed by the City Coalition. Suggestions were developed from the perspective of those affected in focus groups organised by the Migrant Advisory Board of the City of Graz with more than 50 potentially affected persons. The Human Rights Advisory Board contributed several suggestions, which were discussed and decided upon at the Advisory Board meeting on 11 June 2024. Further measures were collected in the municipal departments and include, in particular, the protection of municipal employees and those of associated companies against racial discrimination and measures within the framework of the diversity management of the city of Graz. Important measures relate to the areas of conflict prevention and resolution, elementary education and the specific collection of data on equal treatment and discrimination. The Action Plan is to be submitted to the municipal council for approval.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz), contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

⁶⁸ European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz), contribution to the 2024 Human Rights Report.

Members of the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz

As of September 2024

Max Aufischer (Chairman) Kulturvermittlung Steiermark	Anna Majcan Frauenrat Graz (Women's Council Graz)	Mag.^a Ulrike Taberhofer KPÖ-GR Klub (Local Council Club KPÖ)
Drⁱⁿ Elke Lujansky-Lammer (Deputy Chairwoman) Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft Regionalbüro Steiermark (Ombud for Equal Treatment Regional Office Styria)	Mag.^a Gabriele Metz, MA Ombudsstelle für Grazer Mädchen und Frauen (Ombudsoffice for Girls and Women of Graz)	VD Daniela Touray, Med Bed VS St. Andrä (Primary School St. Andrä)
Tristan Ammerer Grüne GR-Klub (Local Council Club Die Grünen)	Joe Niedermayer RosaLila PantherInnen	Nora Tödting-Musenbichler Direktorin Caritas Steiermark (Director Caritas Styria)
Dr Wolfgang Benedek Universitätsprofessor i.R., KarlFranzens-Universität Graz (University Professor ret., University of Graz)	Fred Ohenhen ISOP – Innovative Sozialprojekte (ISOP - Innovative Social Projects)	Drⁱⁿ Claudia Unger ÖVP GR-Klub (Local Council Club ÖVP)
Sigrid Binder Grüne Gemeinderätin a.D. (Local Councillor ret. – Political Party Die Grünen)	Mag. Wolfgang Palle Beauftragter für Menschen mit Behinderung, Stadt Graz (Representative for people with disabilities, City of Graz)	Mag.^a Angelika Vauti Universalmuseum Joanneum, Abteilung für Besucher:innen (Department for Visitors)
Günther Ebenschweiger Präventionskongress (Austrian Congress on Prevention of Violence)	Sabine Reininghaus NEOS Graz (Political Party NEOS)	Dr Wolfgang Wehapp Amt der Bürgermeisterin (Mayor's Office)
Christian Ehetreiber ARGE Jugend gegen Gewalt und Rassismus (ARGE Youth against violence and racism)	Anna Robosch SPÖ GR-Klub (Local Council Club SPÖ)	Eva Wenig Interreligiöser Beirat (Interreligious Advisory Board)
Mag. Godswill Eyawo MigrantInnenbeirat (Migrants Advisory Board of the city of Graz)	Mag.^a Kavita Sandhu, BA MA Integrationsreferat, Stadt Graz (Integration Department, City of Graz)	Dr Josef Wilhelm Vorstand Friedensbüro Graz a.D. (Director Peace Office Graz ret.)
Mag.^a Daniela Grabovac Antidiskriminierungsstelle Steiermark	Markus Scheucher BHS-Lehrer i.R., Lektor WU Wien (Teacher ret.; lecturer)	Mag.^a Jutta Willfurth Friedensbüro Graz (Peace Office Graz)

(Anti-Discrimination Office Styria)	at Vienna University of Economics and Business)	
Dr Hannes Graf Arbeitsmarktservice Steiermark (Public Employment Service Styria)	Mag.^a Denise Schiffrer-Barac KIJA Steiermark (Ombudsoffice for Children and Youth Styria)	Michael Winter (Korruptions-)Freier GR-Klub ((Corruption-)Free Local Council Club FPÖ)
Brigadier Thomas Heiland, BA MA Stadtpolizeikommandant Graz (Commanding officer of the City Graz Police)	Michael Schwanda Oberlandesgericht Graz (Higher Regional Court Graz)	
Karl Heinz Herper SPÖ Stadtrat a.D., Menschenrechtspreisträger 2019/20 (Local Council Club SPÖ ret.; Human Rights Prize 2019/20)	Dr Klaus Starl Geschäftsstelle, ETC Graz (Secreatriat)	

Position Statements

Position Statement on the 2024 Human Rights Report of the Presidential Department/Citizens' Office of the city of Graz

Received on 6 November 2024

Regarding point 1.1.a):

As a measure to prevent discrimination, all municipal forms were reviewed in terms of their gender-related information in consultation with the Human Rights Advisory Board. Where the respective municipal department requested information on gender identity, the options "male", "female", "diverse", "inter", "open", "no answer" were provided.

Regarding point 1.1.b):

As a measure to facilitate the use of e-government forms, a new e-payment system will be integrated into the form software by the end of 2024. This will make it possible, using a standard comparable to that for classic e-commerce orders, to carry out certain services directly while filling out an online form, including the payment process using a credit card or similar payment systems. In the future, this will apply, for example, to exemption permits for short-stay parking zones, house number orders, tree sponsorships and registry office documents (birth, marriage, partnership, and death certificates).

Another ongoing project to improve the user experience is the increased use of public authority registers to save applicants from having to submit or upload official documents. This has been successfully tested in a pilot project for childcare facilities (nurseries, kindergartens, after-school care, school day care). Furthermore, in 2024, the provision of registry data facilitated the application for free transport for schoolchildren at the Graz public transport company Holding Graz Linien in over 14,000 cases. In the future, this service is to be gradually extended to other administrative areas.

Position Statement on the 2024 Human Rights Report of the Department for Youth and Family of the City of Graz

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1. In the section "The focus on children and young people", it would be good to be able to say that this focus is the City of Children and Youth Graz. Otherwise, it may appear as if there are two offers.
2. Only the title of the children's survey is mentioned, but not the title of the youth survey: "Lass Hören" (Let's hear it) – could this perhaps be added?
3. Please correct the name of the Instagram channel to @junge_stadtgraz so that interested parties can actually find it.

Note from the Secretariat: The text corrections have been made in the text.

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