

WE ARE ALL GRAZ

Integration mission statement
of the city of Graz

graz.at/integration

GRAZ



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PREAMBLE

With the mission statement “WE ARE ALL GRAZ”

the city of Graz would like to renew and strengthen its commitment to a diverse urban community and to Graz as a city of human rights.

In 2005, Graz City Council decided to set up an integration unit. As one of the first municipal integration units in Austria, the city of Graz thus took on a pioneering role. The Integration Unit is a fundamental building block of Graz, which was declared a human rights city in 2001.

The Integration Unit has been actively working on issues of integration and coexistence for seventeen years. During this time, knowledge and stable partnerships have been built up and a great deal of experience gained. A clear principle from these years is integration and good cooperation can only succeed together. This mission statement draws on these experiences and the knowledge gained in recent years and builds on Graz's tradition as a human rights city. It

forms the basis on which the municipal integration work of the city of Graz is to be placed and built upon in the future.

With this mission statement, the city of Graz has deliberately set out on a new path.

The mission statement is based on principles, the so-called premises, which guide the integration work of the city of Graz and a work programme based on them.

The premises of the mission statement are reflected in various official documents of the city of Graz. They are commitments by the city of Graz (1) to a historical understanding of migration that recognises the influx into urban areas as a historical normality, (2) to the aforementioned human rights city, (3) to the appreciation of cultural and religious

diversity in Graz and (4) to sustainable development to maintain the quality of life in our city for current and future generations. The premises complement and refer to each other and are of equal importance.

The work programme builds on these premises and formulates key areas of action for the coming years, while at the same time leaving leeway in order to be able to react flexibly to unexpected needs and situations.

As an Integration Unit, we would also like to take a closer look at areas and perspectives that have previously been less focused on. We see ourselves as a learning unit that focuses on dialogue and competence building. For example, the work programme continues fields of action that have already been successfully addressed, such as language promotion, but also explores new and socially topical issues such as housing and environmental and climate protection.

Overall, our activities should be guided by a holistic and practice-orientated approach which – as has already become apparent in the work of the Integration Unit in recent

years – understands urban diversity as normality and migration as part of Graz's urban development, in which ALL people living in Graz are involved in a certain way. Graz should be a good home for all people living here. The "WE" in the title therefore refers to an "inclusive WE" that includes all people in Graz and addresses them equally.

With the mission statement "WE ARE ALL GRAZ", the city of Graz aims to renew and strengthen its commitment to a diverse urban community and to Graz as a city of human rights with its advisory councils and institutions as well as a lively integration landscape. The mission to become a human rights city, which Graz set itself in 2001, is a continuous, never-ending process that must be constantly re-evaluated and reflected upon and expressed in day-to-day activities. This mission statement is also intended to honour this commitment.

With this in mind, we hope that the lively integration landscape in Graz will continue to support us in a constructive, critical and committed manner.

The city of Graz works for all Graz residents and stands for positive coexistence.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

of the integration work of the city of Graz

Diversity characterises our city's attitude to life

and this diversity is being shaped by
people moving in from near and far.

The attitude to life that makes our city of Graz so liveable and lovable is characterised by diversity. This diversity is being shaped by people moving in from near and far. People have lived here for generations, some only for a certain period of time. They move on, and others build a new life here in Graz.

They all bring new experiences, life plans, perspectives, languages and knowledge with them. Urbanity thrives on encounters and the coming together of these different experiences and perspectives, life realities and ideas. If we succeed in engaging with each other in this diversity, new and innovative things can be created together.

Since the 1990s, the city has been actively addressing how to deal with this migration-

related diversity. This led to the institutionalisation of today's Migrant Advisory Council in 1995. Since the 2000s, work has been underway to implement Graz as a human rights city, and in 2007, the Graz Human Rights Advisory Council was established. In order to be able to systematically plan and coordinate further municipal work on the subject of migration and integration, the city of Graz commissioned an expert report in 2001, which recommended, among other things, the establishment of a unit for integration matters. In 2003, a working group consisting of representatives of local associations, organisations and experts developed the concept for such a unit, which was adopted by the municipal council in 2004. Since 2005, the Integration Unit has been responsible for the promotion and development of projects and strategies as well as public relations and awareness-raising work with regard to integration.

In the first few years, the department focused on networking and promoting intercultural encounters and language support.

The 2010 integration strategy emphasised the promotion of equal opportunities and the acquisition of the German language. In the following years, the language and educational programmes were expanded. In particular, since the unit became part of the Department for Education and Integration in 2013, a close interface has developed with the areas of education and language, which has created important synergies.

With the 2015–2020 integration strategy, the Integration Unit focused its work increasingly on the involvement and active participation of individuals and named languages, rights & duties, culture & values, interreligious dialogue and identification as the five so-called “pillars” of integration.

Against the backdrop of the refugee movements in 2015, the Integration Unit has also been working more intensively on the topic of refugees and related urban issues and topics since 2016. Networking and information transfer are an important part of this.

Since 2017, the Integration Unit has also been responsible for the topic of “Volunteering”, through which municipal services in this area are further developed and bundled. The New in Graz package has been a continuous service package of the department since its inception¹

Since 2005, the Integration Unit has been working on the coordination and implementation of integration measures

as well as promoting the integration and participation of all people living in Graz.

¹ A comprehensive description of the creation and further development of the Integration Unit and the changes in the city of Graz’s integration strategies can be found in the anniversary publication “Shaping. Integration. Together. 15 years of the Integration Unit of the city of Graz” (city of Graz 2021).

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

of the integration mission statement in several stages

Issues of good coexistence

and strengthening social cohesion require jointly supported solutions and approaches. Participation creates a say and strengthens identification.

The city of Graz is committed to promoting the participation of all people living in Graz in the development and implementation of measures for living together in diversity² Participation creates a voice and an opportunity for identification.

The participation of affected people promotes needs-orientated solution finding, encourages and empowers those affected to articulate and address their interests, strengthens the sense of responsibility and accountability in the implementation of concrete measures among those involved and increases the quality of the solutions developed by bringing in different sources of

knowledge. Joint solutions and approaches and the inclusion of different perspectives and approaches from different population groups are needed, particularly when it comes to issues of good coexistence and strengthening social cohesion.

The process for developing this mission statement was therefore designed and implemented as participatively as possible.

The participatory development process for this mission statement lasted a total of two and a half years. Experts from practice, academia and administration and representatives of self-organised migrant associations, NGOs and committees were involved.

² See also the guidelines for citizen participation of the city of Graz
https://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10327256/7765198/Leitlinien_fuer_die_BuergerInnenbeteiligung.html

The people of Graz were able to contribute in the form of an online survey.³ The entire process was documented and summarised by the team of the Integration Unit and reflected on together with an external expert from the academic world in the form of regular meetings.

The Migrant Advisory Council was continuously involved in the process in various ways; on the one hand, it acted as an expert on topic-specific issues in the context of interviews and events, and, on the other hand, it was available to the unit as a central network partner in the development of this mission statement. The process was divided into several stages⁴ In early summer 2020, the first two utopia workshops were held with experts and NGO representatives in view of the 15th anniversary of the Integration Unit and the expiry of the Integration Strategy 2020, in which creative utopias for Graz were designed through interactive exercises and role-playing games. The aim was to think “outside the box” and develop new

fields of action and methods for future integration work.

In spring 2021, the team from the Integration Unit held a closed meeting to develop an overview of the department’s current and potential areas of activity based on the ideas from these previous workshops. Current challenges and new potential topics were analysed. In the same year, the unit commissioned a status quo survey entitled “Integration in Focus”. This study used current data and reports as well as interviews with experts to determine the current status of six fields of action. Corresponding conclusions were drawn from this⁵

The 15 experts interviewed, who work in various institutions on the topic of migration and integration in Graz, were asked on the one hand about the social participation of Graz residents with a history of migration and on the other hand about a specific field of action corresponding to their expertise.

³ The broad involvement of different groups follows the 2015 statement of the Migrant Advisory Council, which suggested that the broadest possible involvement of various stakeholders and civil society should take place in the development of guidelines for urban integration policy.

⁴ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some time and location adjustments had to be made during the participatory process, such as postponing the workshops to summertime, when legal restrictions were relaxed, and conducting the survey of the population of Graz online.

⁵ The fields of action include children, youth and education; language; women and equality; work; network, religion and identity; and housing as an additional field of action introduced by the experts.

Focus on integration: Determining the current status of six fields of action



In addition, a multilingual⁶ online population survey was conducted in which people over the age of 15 who were registered as residents in Graz were asked about living together in Graz. A total of 1,626 questionnaires were completed by the population of Graz over a nine-week survey period. In addition, a proposal for future data monitoring was developed as part of the status quo survey⁷

The results from the previous events and from the status quo survey were compiled in the unit and analysed in an overall view with the help of an expert from academia. Based on this, the basic outline of the mission statement was drawn up and an initial topic container for the work programme was created.

In a dialogue event in July 2022, almost 40 participants (consisting of representatives of the Migrant and Human Rights Advisory

Council, representatives of local NGOs, co-operating organisations, administration and politics⁸) were presented with the main features of the mission statement, questions were answered and an assessment of the content was requested. The participants then worked on the two topics “Housing & migration” and “Generations in dialogue” in two parallel workshops in a group setting. At the beginning, experts provided technical input on the current situation, after which the participants developed visions and objectives using a participatory and creative approach. The results of this are reflected in the work programme as new perspectives and fields of action.

The final results of the overall process are now available in the form of this mission statement and the work programme.

⁶ The online survey was available in German, English, Croatian/Serbian, Turkish, Romanian, Farsi and Arabic.

⁷ A summary of the report can be found at graz.at/integration

⁸ The following were represented (in alphabetical order): Afro-Asian Institute, Anti-Discrimination Office, ARGE Youth against Violence and Racism, Caritas Styria, Danaida, Deutsch und Mehr, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Peace Office, gemma!, Ombud for Equal Treatment, IKEMBA, Integration Unit, InterACT, ISOP, Human Rights Advisory Council, Mentorus, Migrant Advisory Council, Pronegg & Schleich Social Services, Sindbad, City Councillor Krotzer, Office of City Councillor Krotzer and Zebra.

2020

Utopia workshops

2020

Review in the context of the publication “Shaping. Integration. Together.”

2021

Workshop of the Integration Unit

2021
–
2022

Status quo survey with expert interviews and an online population survey

2022

Dialogue event “WE ARE ALL GRAZ”

THE FOUR PREMISES

of urban integration work

The city of Graz organises its integration work according to four principles.

Over the last 25 years, Graz has addressed various aspects and current challenges of an urban society in numerous initiatives, documents and declarations.

On the basis of these principles, four premises for integration work in the city of Graz were identified and formulated.

PREMISE ONE

Historical migration awareness
of the city of Graz

Graz was and has always been a place

which is characterised by
different migration movements.

The city of Graz is aware of the historical dimension and significance of migration movements for the development of Graz. Like cities all over the world, Graz has always been a place characterised by immigration.

This “historical normality of migration”, also described in the Historical Yearbook of the city of Graz 2022,⁹ and the associated influx of different people from different regions and countries to Graz results in the coming together of different perspectives, knowledge, life experiences and skills.

Various actors in the city shape this given diversity according to their own ideas. This design process is influenced by current social discourse, the existing legal system, political structures, norms and ideas.

In general, valuable learning opportunities arise when dealing with diversity in the city.

Diversity in itself represents cultural, economic and social resources for all, which are conducive to the further development of individuals and society as a whole.

⁹ Bouvier, F. et al. (2022): Introduction. In: *ibid.* (ed.): Migration Space Graz. Historical Yearbook of the City of Graz. Leykam: Graz, p. 12.

PREMISE TWO

Human Rights City Graz

Human rights form the basis

for all measures in the field of
integration work in the city of Graz.

Since 2001, the city of Graz has committed itself in the Graz Declaration of Human Rights to being guided in its actions by international human rights¹⁰ and is supported in this endeavour by the Graz Human Rights Advisory Council.

The city of Graz pursues this goal in cooperation with the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC), which is also the office of the Human Rights Advisory Council and runs the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels located there. This mission is supported by a

number of organisations in the city, such as the Styrian Anti-Discrimination Office, the Graz Peace Office and many more.

Human rights therefore also form the basis for all measures in the area of integration work and the recognition of migration biographies for the city of Graz.

A particular focus in the implementation of human rights is on informing children and young people about human rights and subsequently on children's rights, the dialogue between the generations, the design of a gender-equitable city of Graz, anti-racism work and the representation and hearing of the

¹⁰ The European Convention on Human Rights and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights are regarded as important human rights documents within Europe.

interests of migrants, directly and through representation by the Migrant Advisory Council of the city of Graz.

Children's rights in Graz

The city of Graz is committed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and thus shares the vision that “the rights of children are consciously lived in all socially relevant social systems”¹¹. Accordingly, the city of Graz's integration work focuses on respecting the rights of children with a history of migration.

Gender-equitable city of Graz

The city of Graz has been committed to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men since 2012. It is committed to promoting equality between women and men and to combating discrimination and disadvantage of any kind. The city of Graz is also committed to the principle of preventing and combating gender-specific violence (2009). These principles of a gender-equitable city of Graz should be taken into account in all measures in the area of integration work and recognition of migration biographies in the city of Graz. The aim is to empower girls and women and promote justice for all genders, with and without a migration background.

European Coalition of Cities against Racism

The population of Graz is diverse. People with a history of migration make up an important part. Racism weakens the democratic values of a diverse society and jeopardises peaceful coexistence. The city of Graz has been a member of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism since 2006 and is thus committed to taking effective action against racism, discrimination and xenophobia. In 2023, the city of Graz will renew its 10-point action programme with the involvement of the Migrant Advisory Council.

Migrant Advisory Council of the city of Graz

As a political interest group for Graz residents with third-country nationality, the Migrant Advisory Council is an advisory body for urban policy and an important partner in the organisation and implementation of integration work in Graz. It acts as an information hub for migrants on all issues relevant to the city, draws up statements on city-funded integration projects and measures and is represented on all political committees and the Human Rights Advisory Council.

The Graz Migrant Advisory Council

sees itself as an advisory board and co-operation partner in the design and implementation of integration work.

¹¹ United Nations (1989): Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 20 November 1989, Status: 14.5.2022.
https://www.unicef.de/_cae/resource/blob/194402/3828b8c72fa8129171290d21f3de9c37/do006-kinderkonvention-neu-data.pdf

PREMISE THREE

Appreciation of cultural and religious diversity

The city of Graz is committed to

preserving its cultural heritage and has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999.

The city of Graz recognises the value of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. The city of Graz has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999 and is committed to preserving its cultural heritage.

Graz is also a city of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. It is a partner of the Graz Language Network and works with it on campaigns and initiatives to promote multilingualism.

The city of Graz values religious diversity and expresses this by promoting interreligious dialogue. Various projects and initiatives are implemented in cooperation with the Interreligious Advisory Council of the city of Graz and the “ComUnitySpirit” office based at the Afro-Asian Institute Graz. The declaration on interreligious dialogue signed by the city of Graz in 2013 forms an important basis for this. It stands for mutual understanding, mutual recognition, reconciliation, appreciation and cooperation between religions and cultures and serves as a guideline for peaceful interreligious and intercultural coexistence in Graz and Europe.

PREMISE FOUR

Sustainable development
in Graz

The dimensions of sustainable development

should also be taken into account in measures to organise the city's integration work.

In accordance with the United Nations 2030 Agenda,¹² the city of Graz is committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals mentioned above and places particular emphasis on Goal 11, among others: "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"¹³.

of sustainable development – be it social, cultural, economic, ecological or institutional – should be taken into account in all political measures and thus also in measures to organise integration work, so that all people living in Graz have the same resources and opportunities to shape their lives, both now and in the future.

Climate-friendly, social and sustainable cities are needed to ensure the quality of life of future generations. Therefore, all dimensions

¹² See the programme of Ökostadt Graz (2017): https://www.umwelt.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10283128_6703492/af81c930/ÖKOSTADT_Graz_170130.pdf

¹³ United Nations General Assembly (2015): Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York, 25 September 2015. <https://www.un.org/Depts/german/gv-70/band1/ar70001.pdf>

INTEGRATION IS AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY TOPIC

In order to successfully organise coexistence in diversity in Graz, a basic understanding of the subject of migration and its multidimensionality is required.

The formulated premises represent an orientation framework within which measures relating to migration and integration in the city of Graz should be organised. Accordingly, the implementation of these measures should include the historical perspective; respect human rights with a focus on gender equality, children's rights and intergenerational

dialogue; take a clear stance against racism and discrimination of any kind; look to the future with a view to the goals of sustainable development; and value linguistic, cultural and religious diversity.



The four premises of the city of Graz's integration work complement each other and build on each other at the same time. For example, the appreciation of cultural and religious diversity is based on the historical understanding of a grown, urban diversity. In addition, the reflection on human rights provides the framework for all people to be involved in the joint care and maintenance of our resources. The connections between the four premises are shown graphically above. In addition, cultural and religious diversity can only be lived on an equal, non-discriminatory and anti-racist basis in combination with respect for human rights.

The city of Graz pursues the following approaches in its integration work:



WAYS TO SHAPE

integration in the city of Graz

Based on the premises described above, the city of Graz pursues the following approaches in its integration work:

Promotion of participation

The overriding goal of the city of Graz is to enable the participation of people with and without a history of migration. Participation is understood as the equal opportunity to participate in different spheres of society. In the city of Graz, this applies to various services in the areas of education, the labour market, leisure, etc. Measures are taken in those areas where there are barriers of various kinds for people with a history of migration. The provision of information and the possibility of basic orientation form the basis for further subsequent concrete opportunities for participation in society.

Enabling participation

The basis for comprehensive participation is legal and social recognition and participation. Participation should give all people living in Graz the opportunity to take part in the concrete organisation of integration work. The opportunities for participation should be communicated transparently to the outside world and promoted, also with regard to the guidelines for citizen participation of the city of Graz.

Accordingly, all people regardless of their place of birth, origin, age, gender, disability, first language(s) or religious affiliation in Graz should find opportunities to contribute to the conception and implementation of measures to shape coexistence in diversity in Graz, be it in the form of association work or voluntary work; as part of a profession in the educational, cultural, health or social sector; in academia; as business people or representatives of committees; or as individual people living in Graz.

Working in partnership

Integration work at local level is and should continue to be made possible and implemented through cooperation with various stakeholders from the integration sector and civil society. To this end, existing networks with NGOs, stakeholders and expert committees are maintained and expanded, and volunteers and NGOs are supported in their work. Special emphasis will also continue to be placed on the joint development of needs-orientated projects and measures. A key partner of the Integration Unit is the Graz Migrant Advisory Council, which officially represents the interests of Graz residents who are third-country nationals.

Sensitisation & prevention

The city of Graz has set itself the goal of raising public awareness and awareness in Graz that migration is a historical and current part of Graz. Teaching and strengthening intercultural competence at administrative level plays a key role here. The aim is to inform and support departments of the

city of Graz to consider and utilise urban diversity as an interdisciplinary issue in their own field of work and to strengthen their intercultural competence.

Another essential part of raising public awareness is prevention work with regard to discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism and fundamentalism. The aim is to counteract anti-democratic tendencies and raise awareness of the fact that discriminatory mechanisms and structures are still effective and reproduce injustices that need to be tackled.

The aim is to work together to shape diversity in a positive way and to utilise diversity as a resource for the benefit of all.

Responding to current challenges

Migration phenomena are multifaceted and complex. Depending on the respective type and background of migration, different subject areas arise in which measures are necessary in order to fulfil the premises of the integration work of the city of Graz. Accordingly, the city of Graz has set itself the goal of reacting flexibly and in a needs-orientated manner to migration phenomena in Graz. The city of Graz is always aware that

different fields of action can arise in the area of integration work depending on the migration phenomenon and the overall social situation.

To gain a better understanding of these phenomena, the input of independent experts from academia and practice will be sought. Current academic research and studies are key sources of knowledge, enabling us to quickly and objectively identify current challenges and fields of action. The promotion and commissioning of academic work on these topics are part of the integration work of the city of Graz in order to be able to initiate well-founded and suitable measures. To this end, the city of Graz also relies in particular on close cooperation and coordination with various stakeholders from the field in order to develop and implement concrete and locally coordinated solutions and measures.

TASKS

of the Integration Unit

The Integration Unit is responsible for the implementation

of the mission statement and the work programme based on it.

The Integration Unit is responsible for the lead implementation of the integration mission statement and the work programme based on it with its respective fields of action and objectives, taking into account the premises.

In addition, it is the task of the Integration Unit – on the basis of dialogue with experts, network partners and people with a history of migration living in Graz – to propose to politicians an expansion of the fields of action and associated measures.

Accordingly, the Integration Unit acts as an interface between the city council and organisations, associations, interest and self-advocacy groups, experts, initiatives and groups as well as all interested Graz residents with

and without a history of migration. It points out immediate needs and urban options for action with regard to the integration mission statement and initiates projects and measures in the field of migration and integration to promote good coexistence. It carries out active public relations and awareness-raising work by participating in events and issuing information material and publications. It also independently realises service offerings, projects and events in this field of work.

The Integration Unit is responsible for coordinating and processing financial support for projects and measures of organisations, associations and initiatives in the field of integration that serve to implement the integration mission statement and the respective work programme of the city of Graz. As a municipality, the city of Graz is one of several

players in the field of financing measures for integration-promoting programmes. Other local authorities with statutory or voluntary services also have an impact on urban integration measures, such as civil society organisations and voluntary organisations and initiatives with funding options other than the public sector (e.g., donations). The Integration Unit therefore relies on networking, dialogue and coordination in order to design services that are as targeted and needs-based as possible.

The city of Graz sees integration as an interdisciplinary issue that should be taken into account by all offices as far as possible. This means that urban diversity affects all of the city of Graz's departments and that services beyond those provided by the Integration Department also have an impact within the city.

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