



European Coalition
of Cities
Against Racism



City: Karlsruhe

Submitted: 29.04.2025

Level 1

1 Please select your city

Karlsruhe

SAC commented: SAC's overall comment on Karlsruhe's REPORT

10.07.2025

Structure of report

The report follows the structure of the template and provides information on Karlsruhe's structural and institutional setting and legal background in level 1 of its report. The report gives a concise insight into the activities of Karlsruhe in the framework of the ECCAR. It further contains a detailed report on a specific ongoing measure related to Commitment 1 of the 10-Point-Plan-of-Action (10PPA) implemented in the city's function as a democratic institution, in level 2 of the report.

Completeness

All questions are answered and, where possible, interesting details have been provided. Karlsruhe reports on its structural functioning, its legal background and its expectations from and offers to the network of ECCAR and its members expressing its high appreciation for the network, its offers and its bodies. In level 2 of the report, an extensive description of the city's Round Table on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination is shared.

Specific topics

Besides the institutional setting and the political strength and commitment to fight racism and discrimination, the reported policy Round Table on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination is highlighted and appreciated by the SAC. It is deemed to be useful to other members of the coalition. It concisely stresses the challenges, approaches and strategies to overcome difficulties. Factors of success are reflected and convincingly analysed.

Good practice

The SAC assesses the reported Round Table on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination

as a good practice, because of its

- *Relevance*
- *Consistency*
- *Persistence*
- *Effectiveness*
- *Adequacy*
- *Substantiveness*
- *Transferability*

2 How many people live in your city?

Up to 20.000 inhabitants

20.001 to 100.000 inhabitants

100.001 to 500.000 inhabitants

more than 500.000 inhabitants

3 Please tick all options that apply to your country or city

- The country my city is located in is party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The country my city is located in is party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CERD)
- The country my city is located in has adopted domestic laws prohibiting racial discrimination and hate crimes
- The country my city is located in has adopted domestic law prohibiting racial discrimination in the private sector (anti-discrimination laws)
- My city has a legislative or regulatory competence on the prohibition of racial discrimination
- My city has its own legislation prohibiting discrimination within its own competence
- My city has implemented norms and rules preventing racial discrimination, e.g. anti-discrimination clauses in procurement
- Other, namely:

SAC commented: *The SAC welcomes the structural setting in Karlsruhe. The SAC has particular interest in the local provisions Karlsruhe applies.* 31.05.2025

4 What past/historical challenges apply to your city / country?

- Colonial past
- Fascist past
- National socialist past
- Involvement in slavery and extreme economic exploitation
- Involvement in genocide
- Other, namely:

SAC commented: *Thank you!* 31.05.2025

5 Which challenges does your city currently face?

- Significant role of racist political actors
- Significant racist movements in the population

- Coping with ethnic diversity
- Ethnicity data collection is prohibited by law or limited by other factors
- Other, namely:

Racism and discrimination are much more subtle and invisible

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

- 6 Please outline the main achievements your city has accomplished in the fight against racism since the last ECCAR report or, if this is your first report, since your city has become an ECCAR member.
- 12-year continuity of "Weeks Against Racism"
 - Establishment of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Round Table and development of the position paper
 - Concrete considerations for the creation of an effective organizational unit for integration, diversity, and combating discrimination

SAC commented: *Welcome!*

31.05.2025

- 7 Which person is responsible for ECCAR within your city at the political level?

- Mayor
- Vice mayor
- City councillor
- Other, namely:

SAC commented: *Welcome!*

31.05.2025

- 8 Who is responsible for ECCAR within your city at the administrative level?

- Department for integration
- Department for culture
- Department for security
- Department for human resources
- Other, namely:

SAC commented: *Interesting!*

31.05.2025

9 How many people in your city administration are responsible for ECCAR?

2 employees in the Cultural Office

10 How many people in your city administration work on anti-racism / discrimination?

It's impossible to provide a specific number. The Round Table, as well as the Weeks Against Racism in Karlsruhe, demonstrate a high level of activity in civil society.

11 Please describe the diversity in this group of people, i.e. the composition in terms of ethnicity, migratory background, gender, disability, etc

A comprehensive description is hardly possible within this framework. The roundtable demonstrated broad coverage, but people of color, potential victims of antisemitism and antigypsyism, are difficult to reach and are therefore less represented. A broad group with various migration backgrounds, as well as people with disabilities and other identity characteristics, is represented.

SAC commented: *Thank you for sharing these internal details.*

31.05.2025

12 How many actions has your city implemented against racism since the last ECCAR report or since becoming member of the network in case it is your first report?

The foundation of municipal anti-racism work was successfully expanded beyond the Cultural Office and its cultural institutions to include other municipal departments and institutions close to the city, making it significantly more effective – especially in the area of integration.

The Karlsruhe Anti-Discrimination Office, which was originally founded as a private organization, was secured, expanded, and further professionalized by taking over responsibility for it from the Karlsruhe City Youth Committee.

The "Karlsruhe Weeks Against Racism," which were held six times by the city between 2013 and 2019, were successfully continued as the "International Weeks Against Racism in Karlsruhe" under the organization of civil society volunteers even after the city withdrew from the overall organization thanks to the established foundation and monetary and non-monetary support of the city, as well as the participation of individual departments with program items – thus setting important priorities and building networks.

Awareness of the existence of racism and discrimination in all areas of "group-focused misanthropy," as well as its threat to social cohesion, democratic identity, and social peace, increased significantly in the city administration, urban institutions and societies, local politics, educational and higher education institutions, and in large parts of civil society, leading to diverse and successful activities, declarations, more fundamental measures, and the increasing networking of those involved and their activities.

SAC commented: *Impressive!*

31.05.2025

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

13 In which policy areas your City specifically dealt with ECCAR's concerns?

Monitoring, consultation, and collaboration

- Data collection
 - Anti-discrimination office / integration office
 - Information provision and awareness raising
 - Public procurement and cooperation with the private sector
 - Human resource management
 - Service provision
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Cultural diversity
 - Conflict management and public space
 - Other, namely:
-

14 Please briefly describe these actions:

Monitoring, consulting, and collaboration:

Development of the city's cultural concept and its updates, development of the city's integration plan and its updates, and a round table on anti-racism and anti-discrimination.

Anti-Discrimination Office:

The Karlsruhe Anti-Discrimination Office, which was originally established as a private organization, was secured, expanded, and further professionalized by taking over the responsibility of the Karlsruhe City Youth Committee.

Office for Integration

Language support and integration courses: Organization and support of German courses, including job-related language support and programs for young immigrants; Integration management for refugees; Individual support for refugees in subsequent accommodation by integration managers; Promotion of intercultural projects: Support of local projects such as "ZuMi-KA" to facilitate cultural participation and social integration; development of the network and website "Arriving in Karlsruhe" together with the IBZ; Support for the Integration Committee: Coordination and implementation of integration policy goals in cooperation with the committee, e.g., expansion of the interpreter pool.

Information provision and awareness-raising:

"International Weeks Against Racism," general promotion of anti-discrimination projects and human rights activities of civil society such as Pride of Nations (CSD), "Human Rights Day," training series, and community events.

Human resources:

Increased focus on the topic in the training and continuing education of city employees, mandatory AGG training.

Cultural diversity:

The city values, affirms, and supports cultural and religious diversity and particularly supports, for example, civil society initiatives, associations, cultural institutions, and sports clubs, if they open their programs to diversity, dialogue, encounters, and exchange.

Karlsruhe's Main Cemetery already offers, but is increasingly offering, burial options and places of mourning for all cultural and religious needs.

Conflict management and public space:

In balancing the concerns of "public order" and the often conflicting expectations and desires regarding the use of "public space," we act with common sense and promote mutual tolerance, as long as this is justifiable (e.g., "Landfahrerplatz," etc.).

SAC commented: *Appreciated! The SAC is grateful for the concise report on activities, attitudes of the administration and achievements made so far.* 31.05.2025

15 Does your city collect data in relation to equality and discrimination?

- No
- yes, the Statistical department
- yes, the University / a research institute cooperating with the city
- yes, the Anti-discrimination office or a counselling centre

Other, namely:

16 Which data collection mechanisms does your city use to reveal racist discrimination?

None

Regular surveys

Reports of victim support services

Case reports

Criminal statistics

Other, namely:

18 What were the motives to join ECCAR?

Value-based decision, rooted in self-understanding of the city and its democratic responsibility

Bias-motivated political movements

Coping with ethnic and other diversity

Other, namely:

17 When did your city become a member to the ECCAR?

2007

19 Learning from other cities

Very important

Important

Secondary

Not relevant

SAC commented: *Interesting!*

31.05.2025

20 Exchange with other cities

Very important

Important

Secondary

Not relevant

21 Reporting to other cities

Very important

Important

Secondary

Not relevant

22 Raise voice as a city at the European level

Very important

Important

Secondary

Not relevant

23 Being part of a UNESCO network

Very important

Important

Secondary

Not relevant

24 Does your city have any other expectations not listed? How important are they?

Expectations currently focus on the implementation of the measures developed here.

We warmly welcome the increasing importance and effectiveness and can only pay utmost respect to the outstanding, numerous, and important activities of the ECCAR bodies.

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

- 25 On which aspects would you need some feedback to analyse and improve your city's work against racism and racial discrimination?

Currently, less feedback is needed than human resources for implementation, the funding of which by the city is questionable.

- 26 How could other ECCAR cities support you in your work against racism? In which aspects of your work could you benefit from the input provided by other ECCAR cities?

Currently, we need less feedback than human resources for implementation, although funding for this from the city is questionable.

However, the exchange and good cooperation with the ECCAR office has already provided us with valuable assistance, and the fundamental exchange, especially with the German-speaking ECCAR cities, has often inspired us in our work and will continue to do so in the future.

SAC commented: *Welcome!*

31.05.2025

- 27 What feedback methods would be useful to you?

Session with experts

Discussion session with cities (peer to peer)

Internal training

Open webinar

Other, namely:

- 28 Do you now wish to report your city's experiences and good practices?

Yes

No

Level 2 - Action 1

- 1.1 Please Enter a title of Your Action

Round Table on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination (RT ARAD)

SAC commented: *Overall comment on the ACTION
Round Table on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination*

10.07.2025

The SAC assesses the reported measure as good practice for the reason of its:

- *Relevance*
- *Consistency*
- *Persistence*
- *Effectiveness*
- *Adequacy*
- *Substantiveness*
- *Transferability*

The SAC welcomes the detailed report. The SAC appreciates the report as good practice first of all. It is a full-fledged study providing in-depth analyses on what worked, what were the lessons learned in a process that finally led to a result – the position paper against discrimination – which is supported by a broad basis in the administration and in civil society, deemed having a promising perspective and providing the municipality with three fundamental principles of non-racist behaviour. Further, the SAC assesses the Action as being a good practice. The persons responsible demonstrated patience and obviously applied the theory of change in practice. The process, reaching out to some 200 individuals, was open and needed negotiations among participants to define and realize itself. The words of the rapporteurs make it clear:

It brought together key stakeholders from the administration, city-related institutions and subsidiaries, as well as civil society, for the first time in an organized manner to jointly develop a guiding principle for a discrimination-sensitive and anti-racism urban society. It is not the end, but the beginning of joint efforts and activities. The position paper was the result of this very hard work. However, it paid off, as evaluations show. The first part analyzes in detail the effects of structural and institutional racism and discrimination and shows how the city administration can perpetuate or reproduce discriminatory practices through its structures. The second part describes eight key areas of impact that define concrete goals and time-bound measures to combat racism and discrimination. These measures are intended to initiate structural changes and distribute responsibility among various levels of administration and urban society.

Three guiding principles form the basis of municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work:

- 1. Nothing about us without us – The perspectives and experiences of affected groups must be actively included, and their participation ensured.*
- 2. Focus on needs – Measures are geared to the concrete needs and realities of marginalized people.*
- 3. Representation makes a difference – The visibility and participation of people with experience of racism in decision-making processes must be ensured.*

The SAC agrees with the rapporteurs who conclude: if these principles are actually implemented – anti-racist perspectives are continuously taken into account.

As a study on participatory processes in the field of anti-racism, the

report of Karlsruhe is recommended reading to all ECCAR members.

1.2 Please select the area of activity to which your action fits best:

- Monitoring, consultation and collaboration
- Data collection
- Anti-discrimination office / integration office
- Information provision and awareness raising
- Public procurement and cooperation with the private sector
- Human resource management
- Service provision
- Housing
- Education
- Cultural diversity
- Conflict management and public space
- Other, namely:

1.3 Which city function is your action related to the most?

- The city as a democratic institution, e.g. monitoring discrimination, advisory boards, policies concerning the right to vote
- The city as a rule-maker, e.g. city council decisions, conventions, Charter for Diversity, Action Plan, legal advice services, ombuds-institutions
- The city as an employer, e.g. affirmative action, diversity management, self-commitment by staff, equality requirements in employment contracts of management staff
- The city as a service provider, e.g. immigrant services, trainings, culturally sensitive healthcare, critical reflexion of ethnical stereotypes in art works or sports
- The city as a public contractor, e.g. anti-discrimination clauses in procurement contracts

1.4 Please briefly describe the initial situation in your city, that brought about the need for this action.

Following consultations in its committees in 2021, the Karlsruhe City Council commissioned the administration to establish a "Round Table for Municipal Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Work" (RT ARAD). This round table was to develop an anti-racism and anti-discrimination mission statement for Karlsruhe and, in a participatory process, propose measures for the most discrimination- and racism-sensitive approach possible within the city. The Office for Cultural Affairs assumes the lead role for RT ARAD; starting in 2022, the Office for Integration joined on an equal footing.

SAC commented: *Welcome!*

31.05.2025

1.5 What triggered the political will to this action?

Report on the ECCAR's ten-point action plan; efforts by political parties and broad sections of civil society to promote a discrimination-sensitive urban culture.

SAC commented: *Appreciated!*

31.05.2025

1.6 Does the action explicitly aim at one or several of the following goals?

- Guaranteeing/establishing equality
 - Facilitating participation
 - Promoting equal opportunities
 - Ensuring equal treatment
-

1.7 What is the main aim of the action in terms of discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights?

- To prevent discrimination
 - To eliminate discrimination
 - To sanction discrimination
-

1.8 Specific objectives: what is the expected impact of your action?

The measures expected from the Round Table relate to the development of a basis and structure for independent municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work in Karlsruhe. This will be based on the Karlsruhe Report on the ECCAR Ten-Point Action Plan, the Action Plan against Right-Wing Radicalism, Racism, Antisemitism, and Discrimination, and the Karlsruhe 2025 Cultural Concept.

The Round Table will work together with civil society actors, the Cultural Office, and the Office for Integration, and will be supported by the Cultural Committee and the Migration Advisory Board (now the Integration Committee). The measures include identifying areas of action, developing concrete strategies to combat racism and discrimination, and developing a sustainable structure for municipal anti-racism work.

1.9 What organisations are responsible for this action?

- Local authority
- Civil society
- Civil society is commissioned by local authority

1.10 Target groups: Who are the participants and beneficiaries of your action?

Administration, interest groups, civil society organizations, and citizens

1.11 Please briefly describe your action

From 2021 to 2023, the RT ARAD met regularly. Nearly 200 people from the city's community – including the administration, interest groups, civil society organizations, and citizens in a constantly changing composition – came together for six working meetings. The topics of racism and discrimination were examined from various perspectives, and a mission statement was jointly developed. The work at the round table was closely monitored and co-directed by a support group, in which representatives from the administration and volunteers with expert knowledge (from the RT participants) took up, categorized, and further developed the content of the round tables.

SAC commented: <i>Impressive!</i>	31.05.2025
SAC commented: <i>Welcome!</i>	31.05.2025

1.12 Who are responsible stakeholders in the implementation of the action

- Major / vice major
- City councillor
- Public officials
- Contractors / service providers
- Civil society actors (NGOs, associations)
- Other, namely:
Administrative staff and managers within the administration, subsidiaries

1.13 How much budget is dedicated to the action per year?

- Up to 10,000 Euro

- 10,001 to 50,000 Euro
- 50,001 to 100,000 Euro
- 100,001 to 200,000 Euro
- More than 200,000 Euro

1.14 Where does the budget come from?

- Temporary external funding, e.g. project grant
- Temporary internal funding
- The city's global budget

1.15 Please indicate the time frame and the duration of the action:

2021 - present

1.17 What specific challenges did you face during the development of the action's concept and which solutions did you find?

1. A survey of relevant stakeholders prior to the start of the participation process and the corresponding selection for participation in an initial meeting led to a significant loss of trust within civil society in the first half of 2021. This situation was gradually addressed and clarified at subsequent meetings, which introduced an open invitation and a support group with equal representation for the process.
2. At the round table, we worked with different definitions of racism and discrimination and, in the resulting goals and measures, focused primarily on structural conditions that encourage racism and discrimination.
3. The lack of a coordinating body within the city administration made cross-internal processes more difficult.
4. The support group, as a voluntary, unpaid body, lacked a formal mandate, which repeatedly called into question the legitimacy of this group.
5. Some affected groups were not sufficiently included (see 1.25), which sometimes led to a one-sided perspective in the process. 6. Some participants participated only irregularly or showed little internal involvement, which hampered continuous work and exchange.
7. Low participation by managers, especially department heads, posed a challenge due to the lack of key decision-makers and multipliers.
8. The city is not responsible for many relevant topics identified by civil society, which further complicates the implementation of concrete measures.

SAC commented: *The SAC notes these extremely important insights with interest.*

31.05.2025

1.16 What resistance did you face during the development of the concept? Both internally (within the administration and on a political level) and externally (citizenship rights, civil society organisations, etc.)?

1. It was challenging to adequately address racism and discrimination, as these phenomena are extremely complex and deeply embedded in social structures. They are also closely linked to personal trauma and emotional experiences. Individual actors dominated the discussion and emphasized specific experiences of discrimination. Our approach was to focus on impact areas rather than on discrimination characteristics. By focusing on specific impact areas—such as education, the labor market, or public space—we were able to conduct a structured and practical discussion. This makes it possible to visualize concrete impacts and develop targeted solutions.

2. During the process, we saw that everyone has a different understanding of racism and discrimination, shaped by their environment, experiences, and socialization. While some participants took strong anti-Black racism as the basis for their understanding of racism, others preferred to focus more on LGBTQI+ hostility or anti-Muslim hatred. Our approach was to intensively discuss the results of the round tables, which appealed to a very broad audience, in the expert panel – the advisory group – and to gain diverse expertise there. The participants in the advisory group largely represented various civil society groups and were able to contribute in-depth knowledge to the process from personal experience with discrimination and racism.

3. A key question was who speaks for whom and who has the authority to interpret. It became apparent that white positions at the round table were partly characterized by defensive attitudes, for example, statements like: "We are not racist!", "We don't need to change anything!", or "Don't make such a fuss!" These attitudes made critical engagement with anti-racist perspectives difficult and led to tensions in the discussion process. Furthermore, there was impatience and a lack of understanding from several sides regarding the necessary time required for a participatory and sensitive process. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation by initially making in-person meetings difficult and hindering ongoing collaboration and exchange between participants.

4. The interaction between administrative staff and civil society experts can often be characterized by power imbalances. Administrative staff possess institutional authority, while civil society actors contribute in-depth expertise and practical perspectives. This asymmetry can lead to misunderstandings and an unequal distribution of influence. One solution lies in the concept of meaningful partnerships based on equality, mutual recognition, and shared responsibility. Through transparent communication, shared decision-making processes, and structural support, productive collaboration can emerge that has a lasting impact. Administrative staff have demonstrated their willingness to reflect on their own position in some cases.

SAC commented: *Thank you for these extremely interesting insights into the process and its conditions. The SAC welcomes the approach of focusing on topics and rights rather than so called discrimination grounds. However, the experience of persons discriminated against puts the indignification in the foreground. Therefore it is sometimes necessary to focus on these specific characteristics. What concerns the definition of racism and discrimination, the SAC recommends referring to the human rights clause which outlaws any distinction, restriction, exclusion or preference in the enjoyments of human rights on any ground.* 31.05.2025

1.18 Who are the most important cooperation partners / stakeholders?

Major / vice major

- City councillor
- Public officials
- Contractors / service providers
- Civil society actors (NGOs, associations)
- Individual people
- Other, namely:
City subsidiaries and other administrative staff and managers

1.19 What were the three main arguments for engaging these stakeholders / cooperation partners?

The primary reason for involving civil society actors, city subsidiaries, municipal council members, and administrative staff was the desire for the broadest and most diverse perspectives and expertise possible. Civil society actors contribute practical experience and the perspectives of those affected, while administrative staff have insights into political and bureaucratic processes and the city's subsidiaries (e.g., housing associations, public transport companies) and play a central role in the implementation of anti-racist measures in everyday life. The targeted involvement of municipal council members ensures political feedback and commitment. Furthermore, it was important to create greater visibility for the experiences within the city through the process itself and to generate empathy through exchange. The participatory approach strengthens trust in municipal structures and demonstrates that anti-racism and anti-discrimination work is a shared concern. Affected and committed citizens are taken seriously and actively involved in decision-making processes. Last but not least, the involvement of as many different actors as possible should also ensure the binding nature and traceability of municipal anti-discrimination work and thus enable the strengthening of local democracy and participation.

SAC commented: *Thank you! The SAC appreciates the report on the lessons learned in a participatory process on such complex topic.* 31.05.2025

1.20 Did the target group participate in planning?

- Yes
- No

1.21 Where did you get inspiration for the action?

- Directly from a city
- From the ECCAR network
- From the Toolkit for Equality

Other, namely:

Cooperation with civil society initiatives

SAC commented: *Appreciated!*

31.05.2025

1.22 What specific challenges did you face during planning and while engaging stakeholders, and which solutions did you find?

At the beginning of the project, several COVID-19 restrictions still had to be observed, which generally made in-person meetings difficult. The first meeting was nevertheless able to take place in person, and a meeting in January 2022 took place online. Stakeholder engagement was made more difficult, on the one hand, by the diverse opinions of civil society, which had to be appreciated in all their diversity, and on the other hand, by the desire to formulate clear goals and measures, some of which were very specific. For example, a central demand in the "Community Building" field of activity was the call for safe spaces open only to certain communities, also to protect them from attacks. At the same time, the same group called for open exchange to enable and promote contact between different groups. Reconciling these diverse wishes and demands was a challenge. Our solution was to formulate guidelines that should be considered for all goals and measures, in addition to the various concrete demands in the individual areas of impact:

1. Nothing about us without us:

Civil society, representatives of those affected, and municipal stakeholders are involved as important partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the goals and measures.

2. Focus on needs:

Both the process and the resulting results focus on the interests and needs of those people who are devalued and marginalized by racism and discrimination.

3. Representation makes a difference:

In key decisions, it must become normal for diverse people to be involved, and previously underrepresented groups must be given equal opportunities to participate in political, economic, and social life.

At the beginning of the process, there was a strong desire within the administration to work with only a few, relatively "uncomplicated" stakeholders in order to make the process as smooth as possible. Only later did a gradual opening towards broader participation take place. The challenge was to reach potential stakeholders and win them over to the process in the long term. Another key question was who spoke for whom – both within the administration and from the communities. It became clear that there were different perspectives and power relations that influenced the discussion process. Another area of tension arose from the discrepancy between volunteer work and professional participation: While some stakeholders were able to contribute during their working hours, for others it involved additional, unpaid effort. This led to unequal conditions and affected the continuity of participation.

SAC commented: *Very clear!*

31.05.2025

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

1.23 What were the most important drivers and leverages in relation to your action?

The most important drivers and levers for the approach were the realization that cooperation between civil society actors, the administration, and subsidiaries is required to implement long-term and networked anti-racism and diversity-sensitive processes in the city. Even though various actors in the process assessed the need for different approaches differently, there was a general concern to draw more attention to the topic of anti-discrimination and anti-racism in general. The participants in the roundtable shared a common vision – a world free of racism and discrimination. The recognition that Germany is a pluralistic, linguistically and culturally diverse migrant society shaped the discussions and the corresponding realization that we all consciously and unconsciously contribute to structures that perpetuate racist and discriminatory behavior. At the same time, however, it also nurtured the realization that if we work together to dismantle and break down racism and discrimination, we can create a livable and just city for all. A key aspect of the process is the need for an effective and central organizational unit responsible for the implementation and further development of the position paper and the ARAD strategy. This unit must be equipped with a clear and robust mandate to act decisively, steer the process over the long term, and effectively implement measures.

SAC commented: *Interesting!*

31.05.2025

1.24 What were the most important procedural steps in putting your action into practice?

July 2021 – Official Launch:

The Karlsruhe City Council unanimously approves the establishment of the Round Table for Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Work.

Initial collection of ideas with 30 participants from the administration and civil society.

2022 – Development and deepening of content:

January: Round table (digital) with the intention of clarifying the disagreements from the first meeting and signaling openness.

April: Introduction of a volunteer support group to provide methodological and content-related support.

May & October: Workshops on racism, discrimination, and eight areas of impact (e.g., education, employment, housing, politics).

December: Initial definition of short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

2023 – Strategic Development & Position Paper:

February: Specification of measures and key actors.

April–May: Development and discussion of the position paper, involving municipal council factions for the first time and expanding citizen participation to include key stakeholders from the city administration.

Formulation of a position paper in collaboration with the advisory group.

October: Unanimous adoption of the position paper by the municipal council.

November: Evaluation of the surveys for further development of the format and needs analysis for future measures.

2024 Strategic Paper Comparison

In 2024, on behalf of the municipal council, we compared four strategic papers from the city of Karlsruhe in a multi-stage, internal process: the position paper on municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work (ARAD), the Karlsruhe Integration Plan, the internationalization strategy, and the concept for implementing the Istanbul Convention. We identified that anti-discrimination work in Karlsruhe has so far often been target group-specific and that more comprehensive, structurally effective strategies are needed. While the Integration Plan and the ARAD position paper address similar areas of action in the areas of integration and anti-discrimination, the papers differ significantly in their origins, management, and target group focus. The ARAD position paper calls for a whole-of-society approach to combating racism and discrimination. Recommendations include strengthening cooperation between the city administration and civil society, establishing a board of trustees to evaluate measures, and ensuring sustainable financial and human resources for the continuation of anti-discrimination work, ideally in a staff unit affiliated with the mayor.

2025 – Conceptual work on the structure of the unit and further round table meetings to keep stakeholders on board and continue to engage them.

Despite the difficult budget situation and the changing political majority in the municipal council, internal coordination on the further development of anti-discrimination work will continue. In parallel, work is underway on the conceptual design of the operational unit. To closely involve civil society and maintain the motivation of those involved, two more roundtable meetings are planned this year.

SAC commented: *The SAC welcomes the detailed report. The SAC notes with appreciation that the ARAD paper seems the most comprehensive and advanced compared to the other important human rights documents at local level. The approach is noted with interest by the SAC.* 31.05.2025

1.25 How did you access the target group?

The target group was reached through a multi-stage approach. Invitations to the roundtables were gradually expanded, following a snowball system, so that the circle of participants steadily grew. In addition, stakeholders from the administration and urban society were specifically invited to individual meetings to incorporate their perspectives into the process. The formation of a support group of key multipliers also played a central role. This panel of experts discussed the results of the roundtables in depth and contributed diverse professional and personal perspectives. The members of the support group represented various civil society groups and often had their own experiences of discrimination, which enabled them to contribute in-depth and practical expertise to the process. This ensured that both a broad public and specific specialist knowledge were systematically involved in the strategy development.

Unfortunately, we were unable to recruit stakeholders in the area of anti-Asian racism and antigypsyism. In the area of anti-Semitism, some affected people participated occasionally, but there was no continuous participation that would serve the overall cause. In the area of anti-Black racism, too, we failed to motivate enough affected people (as a percentage of the numerical number of potentially affected people) to continue to participate. Here, we would have relied on more self-organization among those affected and better communication opportunities within the communities.

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

1.26 Public relations: how did you make your action visible in the city?

This action was publicized on the city's website and in the reporting on the municipal council's decision on the results of the round table, but given the importance of the issue, we certainly did not manage to communicate it to the public sufficiently. This was due, on the one hand, to the complexity of the structure and the issue, and, on the other, to the fact that these are currently primarily declarations of intent, the nature and scope of which are not yet sufficiently clear. The fact that the process-based nature of the round table also relies on a certain degree of commitment and continuity of participation was also a hurdle for an overly unrestricted solicitation of participation in the round table. This not entirely satisfactory public perception of the RT ARAD's work must be improved through targeted public relations work when implementing the first concrete milestones at the beginning of 2026. "Public relations campaigns" was also defined as the first area of activity in the position paper.

1.27 What specific challenges did you face when putting your action into practice and during the daily work, and which solutions did you find?

In our daily work, we faced several challenges: First, the varying degrees of personal exposure to racism and discrimination, which led to different perspectives and a host of emotions during the process. Second, the breadth of the issue – rather than focusing on a single discriminatory characteristic, it was important to address racism and discrimination in all its complexity. Third, limited resources, particularly the unequal distribution of time and financial resources between permanent staff and volunteers, posed a challenge.

Solutions included and continue to include creating spaces for reflection and exchange to consider different levels of exposure, strengthening intersectional approaches, and seeking ways to better support volunteer work.

The people personally affected by racism and discrimination who were involved in and for RT ARAD understandably wanted rapid and effective results to improve the situation in their communities. The requesting parliamentary groups on the municipal council also wanted rapid and significant progress and clear recommendations for action. This represented a difficult conflict of objectives with the mandate, which, encompassing the entire field of discrimination and racism, had an immense scope and contained many intersectional entanglements and potential contradictions that had to be considered and negotiated. Our desire, fundamentally shared by all actors, to think through this matter jointly and systematically, to involve and truly engage as many stakeholders as possible, as well as the desire to allow a voice not only to those who do most of the talking anyway, naturally slowed and complicated this process, making it more costly and slower to support and implement. The more impatience and debates grew regarding the scarce resources for this task, the greater the discrepancy became between the expectations of the (often full-time) "professionals" and the possibilities and capacities of the often also "professionals" who carried out the work at and for the RT ARAD, and especially in the support group, in their "free time," often alongside demanding professional activities and other civil society engagements. This also exacerbated the latent, always resonant question of "equal eye level."

1.28 Which impact and outcomes were achieved by the action?

The Round Table, as a participatory format, was a milestone and a central component of the intensified municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work in Karlsruhe. It brought together key stakeholders from the administration, city-related institutions and subsidiaries, as well as civil society, for the first time in an organized manner to jointly develop a guiding principle for a discrimination-sensitive and anti-racism urban society. It is not the end, but the beginning of joint efforts and activities.

The process had various goals and effects.

1. Create a common understanding: The Round Table was and will continue to facilitate the exchange of ideas about racism and discrimination and promote awareness of structural inequalities. The process also aimed to define key terms and sharpen a common stance.
2. Identify needs and challenges: The Round Table served to collect and analyze experiences, perspectives, and existing challenges in various areas of life and, by involving affected groups and experts, to develop practical solutions.
3. Strengthening participation and co-determination: A central concern of the process was to promote cooperation between administration, politics, and civil society and to ensure that people with experiences of racism and discrimination are actively involved in decision-making processes.
4. Development of measures: The round table was intended to develop recommendations for action for politics and administration. Prioritization and allocation of responsibilities for implementing the measures were also to take place.

The effects of the participation process are diverse:

1. Expansion of the dialogue format: The round table established itself as a sustainable forum for exchange and cooperation between various stakeholders.
2. Sustainable integration of anti-racist work: The participatory approach structurally strengthened anti-discrimination work and emphasized institutional responsibility.
3. Transparency and connectivity: The integration of existing strategies (e.g., Integration Plan, Istanbul Convention) demonstrated the connectivity to existing measures.

The result of the participatory process is a position paper on municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work. The aim of this paper is to present the framework, goals, and measures on which the participants have jointly agreed.

A central concern of the position paper is the establishment of a coordination office, which must be equipped with a robust mandate. This office should ensure the sustainable implementation of the measures, coordinate the various actors, and provide resources for continuing education and training, as well as for the implementation of impact-related work. Only through clear institutional anchoring and recognition of the importance of this task by the administrative leadership and the municipal council can the goals formulated in the paper be achieved in the long term.

The position paper is divided into two main parts: The first part analyzes in detail the effects of structural and institutional racism and discrimination and shows how the city administration can perpetuate or reproduce discriminatory practices through its structures. The second part describes eight key areas of impact that define concrete goals and time-bound measures to combat racism and discrimination. These measures are intended to initiate structural changes and distribute responsibility among various levels of administration and urban society.

Three guiding principles form the basis of municipal anti-racism and anti-discrimination work:

1. Nothing about us without us – The perspectives and experiences of affected groups must be actively included, and their participation ensured.
2. Focus on needs – Measures are geared to the concrete needs and realities of marginalized people.
3. Representation makes a difference – The visibility and participation of people with experience of racism in decision-making processes must be ensured.

These guiding principles underscore the need to strengthen cooperation with civil society and ensure that those affected are actively involved in the development and implementation of anti-racist and anti-discriminatory concepts.

SAC commented: *Appreciated!*

31.05.2025

1.29 Was the action evaluated in respect to its impact?

- Yes, periodically
- Yes, more than once but not periodically
- Yes, once
- Not yet, but it will be evaluated
- No

I do not know

1.30 Who evaluated the policy?

We evaluated roundtable sessions at two points in time through surveys. Participants were attendees of the respective roundtables.

1.31 Please point out the methods applied during the evaluation

In an anonymous survey conducted in 2022 and 2024, data on the group's composition and the content of the round tables were collected (2022), and the process and results were evaluated (2024). The evaluation of the results involved, on the one hand, evaluating the participation process itself and, on the other hand, evaluating the results included in the position paper.

1.32 Was the evaluation indicator based?

Yes

No

I don't know

1.33 How did the target group participate in the evaluation?

The surveys were made available online at the event and sent to participants via email afterwards.

1.34 According to your experience, would you deem the practice

Very good

Good

Improvable

It did not meet the expectations

SAC commented: *The SAC deems the self-assessment of the rapporteurs as too modest.* 31.05.2025

1.35 What made your action successful? Please outline the 3 key factors of success

The results of the final evaluation reveal three success factors for this campaign:

1. Establishment of a sustainable dialogue format

The roundtable has proven to be an effective forum for raising awareness of racism and discrimination. The high willingness (72% of respondents) to continue participating demonstrates the strong interest and relevance of the format. Furthermore, a majority of respondents (82%) felt that they had learned something new through their participation and were able to form important partnerships.

2. Positive evaluation of the position paper and desire for continuous information

The developed position paper was received positively overall. Furthermore, the majority (85%) would like a digital communication platform to stay informed about anti-racism and anti-discrimination work.

3. Needs assessment for the further development of the strategy

The roundtables have provided important impetus for further development. These include the need for a clearer allocation of responsibilities, greater transparency regarding costs, and the expansion of the format to include additional areas of impact, as well as even greater participation by migrant organizations.

SAC commented: *Interesting!* 31.05.2025

SAC commented: *Appreciated!* 31.05.2025

SAC commented: *Thank you!* 31.05.2025

1.36 Please outline 3 lessons learnt

The three most important findings from the survey are:

1. The roundtable is an effective format for raising awareness of racism and discrimination. Establishing a sustainable dialogue format between administrative units and civil society organizations can lead to a mutual understanding of challenges.

2. The position paper was overall positively evaluated, although there was criticism regarding the lack of specific responsibilities and measures, as well as the lack of transparency regarding costs and resources. A subsequent non-representative survey of students who examined the position paper in a university seminar reached the same conclusion.

3. Information and exchange in the digital space, e.g., via a website or newsletter, is desired. Reliable reporting with regular updates on the implementation of the position paper is also required.

SAC commented: *Thank you!* 31.05.2025

1.37 What makes your action sustainable?

The results will feed into the work of the future Operational Unit, which will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the anti-racism and anti-discrimination strategy starting in 2026.

The participation process thus demonstrated that a sustainable and effective anti-racism strategy is only possible through close cooperation between administration, politics, and civil society.

The creation of a written position paper, in particular, demonstrates a long-term orientation and institutional anchoring of anti-racism and anti-discrimination work. By outlining responsibilities and developing measures, as well as involving civil society, a lasting process of change is initiated. However, this process requires further steps to actually have a concrete impact.

The anchoring of the three central guiding principles in all municipal processes ensures that – if these principles are actually implemented – anti-racist perspectives are continuously taken into account. Furthermore, if it actually comes to fruition, the establishment of an operational unit starting in 2026 will ensure that the process does not end with the publication of the position paper, but is continuously continued and adapted to new challenges.

As part of the process, existing strategic documents of the city, such as the Integration Plan and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, were also evaluated. This made it possible to identify interfaces and priorities and to integrate the developed measures into existing structures. This ensures that anti-racist and anti-discriminatory work does not remain isolated but is embedded in the overarching municipal strategies.

SAC commented: *Thank you!*

31.05.2025

1.38 Would you recommend the action to other cities?

Yes

No

1.39 What were the most important challenges during the evaluation and impact assessment of your action, and which solutions did you find?

Collaboration in the field of anti-racism and anti-discrimination often unfolds its impact in small, continuous steps – through shared learning, raising awareness, and the gradual integration of anti-discrimination perspectives into administrative action. At the same time, this work is currently facing significant challenges: In a social climate in which anti-discrimination work is increasingly under pressure, and under conditions of increasingly scarce resources, it is difficult to assess whether political will and institutional structures are sufficient to consistently support complex participation processes – even in the face of internal resistance.

A key consequence would be: If the recommendations and ideas developed within the framework of the round table remain without visible implementation, there is a risk of a loss of trust in municipal structures. The willingness of civil society actors to continue to participate could noticeably decrease – especially if participation is perceived as inconsequential or purely symbolic. This would not only result in the loss of a valuable space for dialogue, but also a crucial resource in the fight against structural discrimination: the commitment and expertise of the city's own society.

Conversely, consistent implementation of the recommendations can send a strong signal: It demonstrates that participation is taken seriously and that the city is willing to initiate structural changes – even under difficult conditions. This can strengthen trust in democratic processes, enable new alliances, and contribute to positioning Karlsruhe in the long term as a learning, anti-discrimination, and inclusive municipality.

1.40 Thank you for reporting about this action. Would you like to report on another action?

Yes

No