

Mannheim (Germany)

ALLIANCE FOR LIVING TOGETHER IN DIVERSITY

THE ACTION In times of crisis, fear often fuels mistrust, populism, and division. Mannheim has taken a different path: since 2016, the Mannheim Alliance for Living Together in Diversity has united more than 380 partners from schools, businesses, religious institutions, and public agencies around a shared commitment to democracy, participation, and mutual respect.

THE PROCESS The Alliance strengthens social cohesion through concrete measures, including diversity training for institutions, media literacy to counter hate speech, and the creation of safer spaces for dialogue across social boundaries. It uses digital tools, public events, and neighbourhood initiatives to showcase positive stories of coexistence and to encourage encounters between people who might otherwise remain in separate “echo chambers.”

THE IMPACT The institutions in the city of Mannheim committed to the values of the Mannheim Declaration of Living Together in Diversity and the goals of the Alliance are networked and form a visible majority for the basic democratic order at the municipal level. They have strengthened their commitment to democracy and diversity and expanded their institutional competencies in this area. One milestone is the “einander.Aktionstage”, a four-week citywide programme organised by the Alliance, which makes an essential contribution to strengthening social cohesion and promoting peaceful and respectful coexistence in the city of Mannheim.

Villeurbanne (France)

VILLEURBANNE EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION MONITORING NETWORK

THE ACTION Villeurbanne has a rich history marked by immigration and active engagement in civil society. Building on this legacy, the city became the first in France to place discrimination on the political agenda in the 2000s. Today, Villeurbanne leads and develops a network of partners across employment, housing, social action, health, culture, and education. The Network is committed to supporting residents in preventing and combating discrimination, particularly racial discrimination. The Network further defines collective actions and multi-year thematic plans in collaboration with residents who are most vulnerable to discrimination.

THE PROCESS A central component of the Network is training partners to understand and address intersectional discrimination, encouraging them to adapt their practices and take concrete action through mediation, assisting with meetings with a specialised lawyer, conducting awareness campaigns at key locations, and referring individuals to legal support services. A further aspect of the project is the dedicated Centre for Equal Rights, which supports victims of discrimination, raises awareness, and strengthens stakeholder collaboration.

THE IMPACT Since 2010, more than 1,100 discrimination cases have been addressed, reflecting both the scale of the problem and residents' trust in the city. Beyond numbers, the initiative has shifted mindsets, built alliances, and embedded anti-discrimination into local governance. The Network demonstrates how municipalities, working in collaboration with stakeholders, can serve as engines of justice, ensuring that no one is excluded due to their identity.

Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg)

EVENT SERIES ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND SOLIDARITY

THE ACTION The event series on women's rights and solidarity, organised for International Women's Day 2024, brought together diverse activities to highlight women's struggles and achievements. It included the Let's Show Equality project with temporary street signs honoring women, the public exhibition Pictures of Human Rights, the participatory street art action Colors of Life led by Syrian artist Dima Alrefai, a film debate on Seven Winters in Tehran, a Human Library event on “Women's Voices,” and a conference with testimonies under the theme Women – Life – Freedom – Resistance.

THE PROCESS By combining artistic expression, public space interventions, film, debate, and testimony, the event series fostered awareness of historical and geopolitical contexts, including colonial legacies, while amplifying the voices of women, especially women of colour. Through accessible, participatory formats, the events engaged women, people of colour, and the wider public. It challenged Eurocentric views on feminism and migration, exposed the stereotyping of racialised women, and critiqued dominant narratives that often marginalise women of colour, refugees, and Muslim women.

THE IMPACT The event series has broadened the public's understanding of the realities faced by women of colour, refugees, and those living in conflict zones. It has challenged culturalism, misogynoir, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, and femonationalism, but also fostered empathy and promoted intercultural dialogue, especially among women. By engaging educators, social workers, and the wider community, Esch-sur-Alzette has amplified the voices of marginalised women through diverse events, laying the foundations for lasting, inclusive change.

ECCAR AWARD 2025

DO NOT GO TO EUROPE GO BACKWARDS

Graz (Austria)

HUMAN RIGHTS ELECTION CAMPAIGN MONITORING

THE ACTION Since 2007, Graz has run the Human Rights Election Campaign Monitoring project to protect dignity in political discourse. Rooted in the Graz Declaration of Human Rights, Austria's constitution, and European guidelines against hate speech, it responds to a rise in racist and inflammatory campaigning, often targeting marginalised and racialised groups and leading to spikes of discriminatory violence.

THE PROCESS At the core is a bold, transparent, and educational method for evaluating election communication. The election campaign barometer uses a traffic-light system to assess campaign language. Green marks inclusive discourse, yellow signals questionable rhetoric, and red highlights violations of human rights. Rather than naming and shaming, it encourages reflection and responsibility. Experts analyse campaign materials through legal, sociological, and linguistic lenses to ensure clarity, neutrality, and fairness, and share their findings through a website, media outreach, and press events.

THE IMPACT The election campaign observation project documented 650 campaign materials, produced four legal opinions, 12 human rights opinions, and three individual opinions, and generated over 50 press articles, alongside a dedicated website, four press conferences, a televised debate with top candidates, and extensive educational outreach through a teacher training course and numerous school workshops. Its impact was tangible: in 2008, the material was used as evidence in a court case for incitement, and by 2013 and 2017, election campaigns had become significantly more moderate, with all parties framing their manifestos around human rights and markedly fewer racist attacks.

Monheim am Rhein (Germany)

CITY FOR ALL – INTEGRATION CONCEPT

THE ACTION Monheim am Rhein is redefining integration with its vision of becoming a “city for all.” Its Integration Concept, revised every electoral term with input from the Integration Council and adopted by the City Council, shifts focus from deficits to the strengths and contributions of residents with international family histories. Rooted in equal opportunity and anti-racism, the city treats diversity as an integral part of its identity.

THE PROCESS The Concept positions integration as a shared task across all municipal structures. Developed through broad cooperation with schools, civil society, and local initiatives, it reflects the lived experiences and real needs of its users. The 2022 update focuses on four key areas: empowerment, community building, and dialogue; the prevention and response to racism and discrimination; educational equity and participation; and language development for better inclusion.

THE IMPACT Monheim am Rhein has created more than an integration plan. It has built a framework for equal opportunities and coexistence. By aligning political will with grassroots input, the Concept has fostered a broad involvement of municipal and civil society stakeholders. Since the City Council adopted the Concept in 2022, numerous measures have been successfully implemented, and efforts to promote diversity and combat racism have been expanded and firmly integrated into the city's overall structures and facilities.

Wörgl (Austria)

LANGUAGE SUPPORT CONCEPT

THE ACTION The City of Wörgl launched a new language support initiative in response to the rising number of children failing the Austrian government's mandatory German test before entering elementary school. Recognising that linguistic barriers were leading to segregation and unequal opportunities, the city developed a holistic, inclusive concept aimed at improving early language support and fostering a stronger sense of community across its multilingual and multicultural education system.

THE PROCESS Each kindergarten and daycare is analysed individually to provide tailored solutions, from family-oriented language programs to playful, culturally responsive learning environments. Educators receive specialised training, and institutions work together under the coordination of the local integration organisation kommunity. This ensures smooth transitions into elementary school, cross-institutional exchange, and lasting support networks.

THE IMPACT The impact is already visible: stakeholders show greater awareness of the challenges posed by linguistic and cultural diversity, cooperation between institutions has intensified, and targeted measures are being implemented to improve conditions in individual facilities. Ultimately, Wörgl's language support concept emphasises that diversity is a natural part of every society. By embracing it as a strength, the concept helps to create learning-friendly and inclusive communities where children can thrive.

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