

# Self-conception of the Leipzig Alliance against Anti-Muslim Racism

(Leipziger Bündnis gegen antimuslimischen Rassismus)

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## Foreword:

For us, alliance work means being in a constant process of self-reflection and further development. This is also how we understand this self-image, which is constantly being reconsidered and further developed and is therefore never finally "set in stone".

## About the alliance:

The Leipzig Alliance against Anti-Muslim Racism is a coalition of committed organizations, initiatives and individuals from Leipzig's civil society. They campaign against anti-Muslim racism and for a democratic and pluralistic coexistence in their city.

We do not represent "Islam" and are not a representation of Islamic religious communities, but we are a civil society alliance and name anti-Muslim racism in all its forms. Muslims of religious and non-religious self-understanding as well as Muslim communities are very welcome to join the alliance. Their participation is very valuable for the Alliance's work and further development. The alliance emerged from the cooperation of several Leipzig organizations on 1 July - the nationwide day against anti-Muslim racism and the anniversary of the death of Marwa El Sherbini. Developments such as the Monday demonstrations by Pegida and Legida as well as events such as the attacks in Halle on October 9, 2019 and in Hanau on February 19, 2020 and the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 reinforced the need to get involved and actively seek allies. Since 2020, more and more organizations have participated in the Day of Remembrance and Action and in 2021 we appeared as an alliance for the first time.

Two of the alliance members are also partners in the nationwide competence network against Islamophobia and Muslimophobia: ZEOK e.V. since 2020 and the Association of Binational Families and Partnerships since 2021. These two associations, together with NIR (Network against Islamophobia and Racism), are also members of the CLAIM Alliance, which coordinates the day of action nationwide. Through their participation in CLAIM, the day against anti-Muslim racism has become more present in the political work of Leipzig's actors.

We are aware of various racisms and how they are intertwined. In the Leipzig Alliance against amR, the focus is on addressing anti-Muslim racism.

The people active in the alliance are from Leipzig. They have diverse backgrounds, e.g. in terms of profession, education, religion, language skills and socialization. As a result, they are positioned differently in society, i.e. they are perceived differently and experience different levels of advantage (privilege) and disadvantage (discrimination). As a result, they have different levels of experience and knowledge and can therefore contribute different perspectives to the alliance. The members have agreed on the following basic principles, goals and fields of action.

## Basic principles:

### **1. alliance work is a process**

By regularly reflecting on our alliance work, we want to expand our awareness, impact and action radius and build sustainable structures.

### **2. criticism of racism as a basis**

The alliance partners and their representatives are not outside of racism. This results in the following demands on the people active in the alliance:

1. we are prepared to engage in an ongoing critical examination of racism.
2. we value criticism and are prepared to accept it.
3. We are aware that we also reproduce racism in our actions.
4. we examine our alliance for power and dominance relations.

### **3. the alliance work serves as a resonance and learning space**

We name racist and otherwise discriminatory representations in language and behavior in order to dismantle them. In doing so, we are guided by Article 3 of the German Basic Law: "No one should be disadvantaged or favored because of their gender, descent, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, religious or political views. No one should be discriminated against because of their disability."

In concrete terms, this means

- 1) in our alliance work, we take care not to make any discriminatory attributions and avoid othering and the creation of alleged differences. This means that we avoid "us - the others" thought patterns and the construction of supposedly uniform groups in which individuality is lost.
- 2) When attributions are made in the alliance, we address them. This means that we clarify when we make assumptions about people based on their appearance, their name, their origin, their faith and on the basis of practiced ideas. This also means that we point out when we make the following attributions:

- racist attributions (i.e. making assumptions about a person based on their appearance or origin),
- culturalizing attributions (i.e. basing assumptions about a person on culture)
- exoticizing attributions (i.e. classifying a person as "exotic" - as different in an interesting way and less civilized)

- 3) in order to constantly develop ourselves further, we respond to internal training needs and make use of the expertise available within the alliance.

### Goals of the alliance:

We have set ourselves the following goals:

- To network activists from Leipzig and the surrounding area and join forces to jointly make anti-Muslim racism an issue in Leipzig
- to ensure broad and sustained attention in order to raise awareness of anti-Muslim racism, especially in the majority society
- train alliance members to be critical of racism and thus provide a resonance and learning space for learning together and from each other
- initiate and promote political discourse and developments in urban society and work towards structural changes
- inform people affected by discrimination about contact points and refer them to suitable help centers, including anti-discrimination centers in Leipzig
- offer allyship and support, amplify the voices of marginalized groups and share our structures and resources

### Alliance activities and fields of action:

The alliance is an actor and information point on the topic of anti-Muslim racism. It:

- bundles expertise in the field of anti-Muslim racism
- carries out campaigns and events in Leipzig
- supports alliance partners and cooperation partners in the implementation of campaigns and events on the topic of anti-Muslim racism
- networks, cooperates and forms alliances with other alliances critical of racism

### Participation:

Individuals as well as representatives of initiatives and organizations can participate in the alliance if they

- agree with our principles (see Criticism of racism and learning/resonance space),
- regularly participate in alliance meetings (alliance member/partner) or
- want to get involved temporarily (cooperation partner, supporter).