

Tolerance and non-discrimination

1. Religious affairs

The freedom of religion or belief is guaranteed in article 4 of the German Constitution Law. Although also a person with foreign origin has the right to insist on this right, there are barriers to be observed. One of the main problem is that although in the Federal Republic of Germany religious affairs and the institutions of the State are strictly separated from each other, in the introduction of the Constitution Law is the term "God" mentioned. Just this word is the reason of many problems within the society which is determined by different cultures and religions in Germany.

If a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf wants to work as a teacher at a public school she will be confronted with the law of some federal states so that she will not get permission to work in her profession. The reason is that the neutrality is not protected and that the freedom of religion in article 4 also gives the right to decide whether believing in a religion or not.

On the other side, they allow Christian churches teaching students in their own religion – including wearing religious symbols at school. In some schools and court-houses there are also crucifixes.

Where is the neutrality of the State in these cases? Or are the barriers just existing for non-Christian religions?

This division of the different religions leads to misunderstanding within the society and to cuts across ethnic, social and religious boundaries. The main effect might be prejudice against foreign cultures and religions.

2. Problems in education / at school

Since the new school period in 2009 has begun, in Bavaria there is no more possibility to take Turkish courses by teachers who specially were sent by Turkish Government for mother tongue language courses for Turkish students. The improvement of bilingual education is in danger.

Having a good command of a foreign language, in this case Turkish, is beneficial for integration because integration also means that someone doesn't have to give up his foreign identity.

Knowing that the own mother tongue is of equal value, someone gets more self-confidence. Self-confidence is an important factor for a successful integration.

3. Hate crimes

Once a year, the Ministry of the Interior publishes the "Statistic of Crimes". One of the topics handled is hate crime.

The number of hate crimes has increased since a few years. The Statistic of Crimes is an important factor for political discussions and decisions.

Nevertheless, many hate crimes are not registered.

The police officers have to register a hate crime in a special department, but they don't mention all hate crimes. This may be attributed by less experience on hate crimes so that the police don't recognize a crime as a hate crime. But this may also be attributed to the fact that hate crimes are still taboos and people don't want to recognize that hate crimes are existing – still or again.

In August 2009 there was a hate crime attack on a group of Turkish teenagers who had gone to Lindow, a small town in the East of Germany, to a training camp of "Türkiyemspor, a soccer club from Berlin.

Just a few days later, before the injuries of the teenagers got better and although the police just had started to investigate the case, the mayor of Lindow gave an interview and emphasized that people in Lindow don't have any prejudice against foreigners.

That is the way some politicians are handling with hate crimes. But negating hate crimes doesn't mean that they don't exist.

There will come some new problems to Germany:

The Supreme Court judged on 13th August 2009 that it is not punishable to publish prohibited terms of National Socialism in foreign languages.

In this case, people printed the forbidden slogan "Blood & Honour" ("Blut & Ehre") on t-shirts. This is a slogan used by the Hitler Youth (Hitler Jugend) in English.

This decision of the Supreme Court shows that the legislature in Germany has to change the terms in § 86 a StGB, in which it is determined that terms of National Socialism are prohibited in each language.

The lack of this law is that – if you follow the decision-making reasons of the Supreme Court – not everybody is able to recognize that this slogan is one of the National Socialism due to the fact that it is published in foreign language.

The Legislature has to act urgently.

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