

**#GEMEINSAM  
ZUKUNFT  
GESTALTEN**

# Abstracts

zum Handlungskonzept gegen  
Rechtsextremismus und Rassismus



Gefördert von



durch das Landesprogramm



Ministerium für  
Kultur und Wissenschaft  
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



**K** Kommunales  
Integrationszentrum  
StädteRegion Aachen

Right-wing extremism and racism continue to rise. This is a problem that we want to tackle in the Aachen city region. We want to better understand the causes and develop strategies to raise awareness and take action against the problem. To this end, we have developed a concept for action against racism, anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism.

The Kommunale Integrationszentrum is responsible for these topics in StädteRegion Aachen. So if you have any questions or do not understand something, please get in touch.

We would like to inform you about what the action plan is all about and what goals we are pursuing together with our partners in the region. We provide a brief summary of each chapter of the action plan here.

## 1. Introduction incl. recommended actions

StädteRegion Aachen has been participating in the NRWeltoffen state project since 2017. This aid programme focuses on work against right-wing extremism and racism. To this end, the Kommunale Integrationszentrum draws up action plans based on what is actually needed in the cities and municipalities in the Aachen city region. Affected people can help shape it! We incorporate your wishes and experiences, analyse them and then develop specific measures.

We conducted an online survey to develop current recommendations for action against racism. We asked people from the Aachen city region whether and where they have experienced hatred, discrimination or racism in their everyday lives. This involved various areas of life, e.g. work, school or contact with the authorities.

Another chapter deals with organised right-wing extremism in the region. The topic was covered by the research of a specialised journalist, the constitutional protection report, media reports and specialist literature.

The third topic in the action plan is anti-Semitism. An expert who researches anti-Semitism and was therefore able to provide important information on measures against anti-Semitism was interviewed.

Our goal: We want to act in a target-oriented manner! We want to inform people, educate them and take concrete action when right-wing extremism and racism emerge. And we would also like to encourage people who live in the Aachen city region to do the same.

### Some goals and recommended actions are as follows:

1. **Dealing with racism and discrimination in educational institutions:** Day-care centres and schools can find information on racism and discrimination and what they can do to combat them. We offer training, support and answers to questions.
2. **Raising awareness of racism, anti-Semitism and diversity among residents of the city region:** We organise workshops, action weeks, campaigns and much more together with many partners to make people living here aware of these issues and to inform them.
3. **Knowledge transfer:** We offer seminars and information on topics such as racism, anti-Semi-

tism and right-wing extremism.

4. If racism and discrimination emerge within public authorities, **we want to point this out, name it and implement measures against it.**
5. **Emphasise diversity and variety more strongly! In the administration and in the cities and municipalities, we bring these issues forward with our partners.**

To combat right-wing extremism and racism, we develop concrete measures and act together. We talk about problems and challenges, as well as possible solutions. In doing so, we draw on the experiences of the people affected.

## 2. Aim of the action plan & networking

We pursue two strategies to counter right-wing extremism and racism:

1. Initial analysis: We try to find out where the problems and challenges lie. The focus here is on the perspective of people who are negatively affected by racism.
2. Based on this analysis, we develop and implement targeted measures.

If we want to successfully combat right-wing extremism, anti-Semitism and racism, it will be an ongoing task for everyone involved. This includes, for example, the political sector and public institutions, educational establishments, the media and private individuals. It is also important to promote the establishment of appropriate counselling centres.

NRWeltoffen in StädteRegion Aachen is also intended to ensure that all partners involved can network as easily as possible. As a network platform, we see ourselves as a central point of contact for questions. Furthermore, we can establish contacts and provide information. The partners involved include the political sector and authorities, the entire education sector, volunteers and, of course, civil society.

It is important to agree upon offers, make good examples visible and coordinate centrally. In our action plan, we list 16 examples from the Aachen city region. They show how local initiatives, associations, the political sector and the administration and employers can work together with other cooperation partners. In each example, we name the target groups and key topics.

## 3. Organised right-wing extremism in the Aachen city region

The right-wing extremism scene in the Aachen city region is just as uneven as it is throughout Germany. However, there is one unifying element: Right-wing extremists assume that people are unequal. In their view, people are worth less than their „own group“ because of their religion, their (ascribed) geographical origin or other ascribed characteristics. The core elements of right-wing extremism include racism, anti-Semitism and an exaggerated attachment to one's homeland.

The right-wing scene in the Aachen city region is partly made up of members of the neo-Nazi scene. They do not always appear publicly as right-wing extremists, but currently in connection with protests during crises such as the coronavirus pandemic or the war against Ukraine and in

Israel. There is a danger in these groups that people will take this world view to extremes and therefore call for violence, for example.

In addition to demonstrations and rallies (e.g. so-called peace demonstrations), right-wing actors use digital media in particular, such as Facebook groups or certain news services. Here they spread right-wing extremist content both within and beyond the borders of the city region.

In this way, they get through to young people and (young) adults in particular. This can lead to the consolidation of misanthropic attitudes and conspiracy-ideology-based world views. It is important to counteract this with counter-strategies and to raise awareness. The focus is on an inclusive society in which equality, diversity and a welcoming culture are the norm.

#### 4. Survey: Experiences of racism in the Aachen city region

Racist mindsets claim that people with certain characteristics, e.g. people with white skin, are better than others, and therefore certain injustices are okay. Differences, which usually relate to outward appearances, language, origin or religion, can be reflected in prejudices. It is no longer about the individual person. Groups are constructed, and certain (mostly negative) characteristics are ascribed to them without question.

In science, a distinction is made between three forms of racism:

**Institutional racism:** In some places that are actually intended for all people, e.g. schools, authorities, universities, people with white skin have it easier than other groups. This must not be the case, because our Basic Law states that all people have the same value, and must therefore have the same opportunities.

**Individual racism:** Individual racism refers to the form of racism that occurs between one or more individuals. This means that if a person racially insults another person or makes them feel that they are different because of their appearance or origin, this is individual racism.

**Structural racism:** In contrast to individual racism, this form of racism is not about a conversation in which something racist is said or an insult is levelled. Rather, structural racism is about the fact that not all people have the same basic prerequisites in a society because many processes and rules in society favour white people. This is because many countries around the world have been oppressed by colonisation by white people. This still has an impact on the lives of many people today.

This can take place openly or subtly, i.e. in such a way that it cannot be recognised at first glance. In order to create a basis for the action plan, we surveyed people with a personal or family history of migration about their experiences with racism. 70 per cent of those surveyed stated that they had experienced racism in their lives.

The chapter on racism contains detailed information, details of the methodology and the main topics of the survey. This includes personal experiences of racism, an assessment of the causes of racism, experiences with authorities and institutions, as well as specific mandates for action associated with StädteRegion Aachen.

## 5. Anti-Semitism - Basics and recommended actions

Anti-Semitism is not a new, but a centuries-old form of misanthropy that is directed against people who are perceived as 'Jewish'. Anti-Semitism was not part of the survey. However, the topic is important and, along with this chapter, it has been incorporated into the recommended actions for StädteRegion Aachen. In addition to a detailed explanation of the term, various forms of anti-Semitism will be identified. This can mean, for example, that people do not want Jews to live in a state of their own, or that Jews are unquestioningly assumed to be a danger. It can also involve a 'guilt-defence anti-Semitism' that is often widespread in the right-wing scene. The latter means that people are saying that we should no longer deal with Germany's National Socialist past. However, we know that this is urgently needed in order to be able to recognise and counteract anti-Semitism in the future.

For this chapter, we have drawn on the expertise of the Center for Anti-Semitism and Racism Studies (CARS). It is based at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences NRW (Aachen department). From there, we received the recommendation to conduct surveys on the topic of anti-Semitism in the region, in order to determine the specific needs from the perspective of Jewish people. These people should also be involved in the development of appropriate countermeasures. Enlightenment, criticism and education can help to counteract anti-Semitism.

## 6. Conclusion

It is very important to take the problems caused by racism and right-wing extremism seriously. Everyone should work together to secure social peace and good coexistence in our region, because extremist and nationalist attitudes jeopardise peace worldwide.

We in StädteRegion Aachen have a responsibility to stand up against hate and discrimination in both our personal and public lives.



## Herausgeberin

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Verantwortlich  
Redaktion/Text  
Gestaltung/Druck-  
erei  
Bezeichnung

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ckerei  
A46/Handlungskonzept/  
Abstracts 02.24

Stand

Februar 2024

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