



The Foreigner Integration Council (AIB) of Linz

Activity Report for 2002

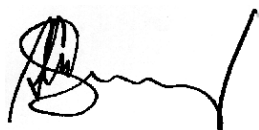
Introduction

In 2002 the six-year term of the Advisory Council for the Integration of Foreigners in Linz (AIB), which was elected for the first time in 1996, came to an end. On 9 June 2002 the new Council was elected.

That is the reason why in 2002 the emphasis was laid on activities dealing with the preparation of the elections for the new Council. Further, among other activities, the action "Welcome! Hospitality for all people and cultures" was realized in cooperation with the Integration Office for Foreigners Linz. In addition, the "MigrantInnenINFOCARD" (Infocard for immigrants), a guide to the most important advisory associations for foreign citizens was published.

2002 was also the year in which several changes in organization took place. Since April Mrs Mag.^a Gudrun Siegel-Kraft has been reinforcing the work of the Integration Office for Foreigners, which is at the same time the Council's Office for administrative matters. In 2002 the Office moved from the old to the new municipal building.

We would like to thank the advisory associations and other institutions taking care of foreigners for the good cooperation we had with them. We hope that the new Council will also be a good partner in all those questions and problems having to do with integration affairs on communal basis.



Dzevat Sulejmani

Chairman (1996 - August 2002)



Krzysztof Sieranski

Chairman (from September 2002)

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1. Activities in 2002

In addition to six open-to-public sessions, The Council (AIB) had held six closed internal working meetings last year, before the new Council was constituted. The purpose of these meetings was to prepare different activities and to plan them in detail.

Since its constituent assembly on 18 September 2002 the new-elected Council met four times until the end of the year in order to organize itself and to find the most important topics.

1.1 Scope of duties: Information Work and Public Relations

1.1.1 "Welcome! Hospitality for all people and cultures"

The Council (AIB Linz) and the Integration Office used the 21 March 2002 -"the international day of the fight against discrimination and xenophobia" as an occasion to start the action **"Welcome! Hospitality for all people and cultures"**

The aim of this action was to present Linz now, as well as in the future, as a dynamic, innovative city, open to the world - to present it as the centre of economy and culture, and at the same time to proclaim that the gastronomy of Linz is hospitable to all people and cultures.

In order to enable inn keepers and restaurant owners to present themselves visibly as open to the guests from all over the world, a sticker **"Willkommen! Gastlichkeit für alle Menschen und Kulturen"** has been made in cooperation with the Upper Austrian Chamber of Economy (Wirtschaftskammer).

The list of all catering firms which took part in this action can be seen on the Internet page www.linz.at under *Aktuell, Aktion: Gastlichkeit*.

1.1.2 To live together – to celebrate together

Under the motto "To live together – to celebrate together" on 25 May, in a housing area in Kleinmünchen, a party of the settlers was organized by the following institutions: Die Vereinigten Linzer Wohnungsgenossenschaften (VLW) (United housing associations of Linz), Volkshilfe OÖ, Land der Menschen – Aufeinander Zugehen in OÖ and AIB Linz.

The purpose of the party was to promote contacts between immigrants and Austrians as far as housing is concerned, because the living together of the people coming from different countries and cultures is not always without problems. Fear and prejudice can sometimes cause the distance between people, so that they hardly communicate with one another.

1.1.3 INFOCARD for immigrants

In June 2002 AIB Linz printed a sort of a guide for immigrants in a form of a cheque card, the so called "MigrantInnen INFOCARD" which gives a survey of all offices and institutions important to the foreigners in Linz. In this way the Council wanted to help the immigrants orient themselves in the jungle of organizations and institutions. Starting from 'Arbeitsberechtigung' through 'Beratungs- und Betreuungseinrichtungen' to the notion 'Studium', different institutions and their services are listed in the guide.

1.1.4 Participation in the event "Stadt der Kulturen"

Since 1998, once a year, under the motto „Stadt der Kulturen“ promotional prizes for outstanding intercultural projects have been awarded by Kulturstadt Linz (Office for Culture) and the Council. (AIB). These prizes serve to acknowledge and to appreciate the continuous integration work of numerous initiatives and associations as well as to motivate them to organize intercultural events and produce intercultural projects. The topic of the year, chosen by the Kulturstadt Linz „The meeting place for the culture of the East and the West“ was also present in this competition of ideas: there were two subject areas: the projects dealing with the cultural East-West meeting and the projects having to do with the sociocultural, intercultural and artistic contents. The prizes were awarded, and the best "Stadt der Kulturen" projects presented during the "Friends-Ball" aboard the ship Schönblick on 9 November 2002. The following associations were among the prize winners: Der Verein Medea, der Verein der Polen, der Verein LENA, Radio FRO and die ARGE für Obdachlose – "Kupermuckn".

1.1.5 Police seminar

Last year, on the initiative of the Council, the already existing one-day police seminar "Situation von und Umgang mit AusländerInnen" (The circumstances and the treatment of foreigners) was enlarged to a two-day continuation course in which a representative of the association Volkshilfe OÖ gave a survey of the foreigners' legal and social situation. Last year The Council organized the second day of the seminar, and in 2002 participated in it again.

In the morning the policemen - participants in the seminar and a Nigerian citizen were confronted with the mutual prejudice and stereotypes, which appear through negative experiences on both sides over and over again.

In the afternoon the group visited the mosque of the Turkish-Islamic Association for cultural and social cooperation.

1.1.6 Lectures given by the members of the Council or by its administrative office

In March 2002, having been asked by the SPÖ-section Innenstadt-Süd to give a lecture, the president and the administrative office of the Council reported about the integration measures taken by the City of Linz, as well as about the circumstances of

the immigrants in Linz. After the lecture the president and the employees of the administrative office answered different questions.

1.1.7 Information desks of the Council AIB

In 2002 as well as in previous years the Council took part in different events organizing information desks.

2002 was the third year in which the AIB Linz presented itself during the events of the "Tag der offenen Tür" of the city of Linz. A winning game was organized, where you could win vouchers for eating in some restaurants.

In September 2002, as well as in the year before, the AIB participated in the event "Fest ohne Grenzen with its informative-stand (edition of brochures). Every year during this event, the prize of the SPÖ Upper Austria is awarded for intercultural work.

1.1.8 Press work

In 2002 the Council used different media to inform about current topics. Public relations were especially intensive during the preparation of the AIB – elections. (see the point 1.4).

1.2 Scope of duties: Representing interests. Measures of integration and support

1.2.1 Rental subsidy (Wohnbeihilfe) for the citizens of the third states

In the last two years AIB was intensively occupied with the problem that the citizens of the states out of the European Community were not entitled to be granted the rental subsidy (Wohnbeihilfe). Each employee in Upper Austria, no matter if Austrian or foreign must pay for the promotion of housing. (Wohnbauförderungsbeitrag). This money is deducted from his wages or salary every month, and is also used for the payment of the rental subsidy. That means that foreigners pay the same amount of money as their Austrian colleagues do, but because of the regulations in the Upper Austrian Act for the Promotion of Housing (Wohnbauförderungsgesetz) cannot be supported with the subsidy. On the initiative of the AIB Linz, in December 2002 a resolution application was passed in the City Council. (Gemeinderat). With this resolution, the Upper Austrian government (Landtag) was asked to change the regulations in the above mentioned Act in order to enable the citizens of the third states to be accepted as candidates entitled to apply for subsidies, i.e for the rental subsidy, too.

On July 4, during the session of the Upper Austrian government, the amendment to the Act (Wohnbauförderungsgesetz) was passed.

Starting from 1 January 2003, it is therefore possible for the citizens of the third states to apply for the subsidy if they have been continuously and legally living in Linz

as their main residence for at least five years. Another requirement to be met is a salary liable to income taxation or the receipt of the money out of the legal social insurance system.

1.2.2 Plattform Integration

The „Plattform Integration“ is a cooperation of the following institutions and associations:

(Verein zur Betreuung der AusländerInnen in OÖ, Land der Menschen OÖ, Volkshilfe-Flüchtlingsbetreuung OÖ, Flüchtlings- und Gastarbeiterberatung der Caritas OÖ, Arbeiterkammer OÖ, ÖGB OÖ as well as AIB Linz), which have been trying to support and integrate foreigners for many years. All these institutions united in 2001. In 2002 they met several times together in order to take a stand on integration agreements and to find alternatives for the integration policy which is more human and more adapted to the needs of the foreigners.

1.2.3 Financial support

Last year the Advisory Council supported several cultural and social events and projects realized by different immigrant organizations and associations with smaller sums of money, according to its financial possibilities.

A project or an event can be supported by AIB only if it promotes integration, contributes to the dismantlement of prejudice and discrimination and/or improves the dialogue and good personal relations among different nations living in Linz.

1.3 Scope of duties: Exchange of information/Network

1.3.1 Plattform AusländerInnen-Integration in OÖ

The platform "AusländerInnen-Integration in OÖ" (The Integration of Foreigners in Linz") consists of the following associations: Steyrer Beirat für Integrationsfragen, Integrationsrat Vöcklabruck, Integrationsbeirat Traun, Welser Integrationsbüro Mosaik and AIB Linz. They met together several times in 2002 in order to exchange information and to discuss current topics.

1.3.2 Exchange of information with the multipliers for integration questions

Multipliers for integration questions (persons to come in touch with at certain offices of Magistrat Linz) met several times in 2002. These meetings were organized by the Integration Office, and the members of The Advisory Council also participated in the talks whose purpose was to exchange information among the multipliers, the Integration Office and the Advisory Council. At the request of the multipliers, it was discussed about the contents of the islamic religion and a mosque was visited.

1.3.3 The list of all immigrant associations in Linz

The AIB made a list of all immigrant associations in Linz.(Self-organisation of the immigrants). On the list, you can also find the adress of the association if sent to the administrative office of the Council. The list can be found on the Internet page www.linz.at in Service Guide under the point "Ausländerangelegenheiten" – Interkulturelle Initiativen und Vereine".

If other associations or self-organized initiatives want to be added to the list, they have to contact the administrative office of the Advisory Council Linz

1.4 Elections for the Advisory Council Linz

The second elections for the Advisory Council for the Integration of Foreigners in Linz were held on 9 June 2002. The persons entitled to vote were all men and women who were not citizens of any member-state of the European Community if they were over 18 on 14 April 2002 (deadline day), and if they had been living in Linz as their main residence for at least one year until 14 April 2002. Altogether there were 13.008 voters.

The persons entitled to be elected were all men and women who were not citizens of any member-state of the European Community if they were over 19 on 14 April 2002, if they had been living in Linz as their main residence for at least three years until 14 April 2002 and if their name appeared on any valid election proposal.

Election proposals for groups (lists) or for individual candidates could be brought to the Integration Office. Each proposal had to be supported by at least 50 voters.

There were three polling stations (one more than in 1996 when there were only two) in order to enable the immigrants living in the south of Linz to come quickly to the polling station. (The polling stations were as follows: Neues Rathaus, Mozartschule, Volkshaus Auwiesen).

Intensive public relations and media work was done in order to draw the immigrants' attention to the elections.

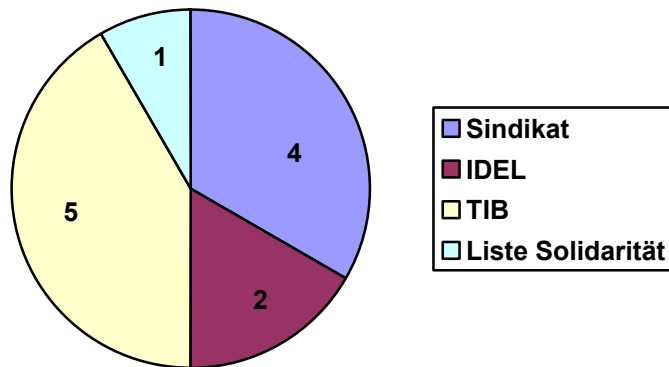
In addition to two multilingual information sheets, which were sent by the mayor of Linz to all 13.008 voters, the AIB Linz also produced a seven-minute telecast for the private TV company LT1, which was broadcasted several times in June. The ORF programme "Heimat, fremde Heimat" also reported about the elections several times.

Additionally, the Council came in touch with the foreign newspapers available in Linz.(e.i. Türkiye, Hürriyet, Vesti, Novosti, Vecernji list, Austria Today Press).

A few days before elections the representatives of the different lists took part in a podium discussion in the Stadtwerkstatt (City Workshop). The discussion was multilingual and lasted two hours. It was broadcasted by Radio FRO

4 lists and one individual candidate participated in the elections. Here are the results:

Share of seats after the AIB-elections in 2002



The list "TÜRKISCH ISLAMISCHES BÜNDNIS" (TIB): 5 seats

The list "SINDIKAT": 4 seats

INTERNATIONALE – DEMOKRATISCHE LISTE (IDEL): 2 seats

"LISTE SOLIDARITÄT": 1 Mandat

VILIC STIPO (individual candidate): no seat

The constituent session of the new-elected AIB Linz took place on 18. September 2002. During the session, the chairman, the first and the second vice-chairman and the secretary were elected).

After its constituent session, the Council met 4 times last year. The meetings were used to discuss the future activities and to find the main discussion topics.

2. Members of the AIB

Elected members (until August 2002):

Patrick ADDAI
Fatma ASLAN
Ante BARISIC
Josip BLAZEVIC
Hifzi COSKUN
Sarah GRAFINGER
Kenan LINZER
Siavash PANAHA
Semiz SALIHOVIC
Dzevat SULEJMANI (Vorsitzender)
Izzet OKUTAN
Nedeljko VUKOVLAK

Members in an advisory capacity (until September 2002) (representatives of the political parties of the City Council)

SPÖ: GR Bettina Stadlbauer
FPÖ: GR Robert Hauer
ÖVP: GR Josef Hackl
Grüne: GR Gülcan Gigl
LiF: GR Ira Shanker

Elected members (from September 2002):

Hifzi COSKUN
Isa ESMER
Engin GÜL
Davut GÜVENC
Ridvan KARABAS
Vedran NAKIC
Ikechukwu OKAFOR
Krzysztof SIERANSKI (Vorsitzender)
Tülay TUNCEL
Radojka VRHOVAC
Ali YAGIZ
Alija ZECEVIC

Members in an advisory capacity (from September 2002):

SPÖ: GR Bettina Stadlbauer
FPÖ: GR Werner Neubauer
ÖVP: GR Josef Hackl
Grüne: GR Gülcan Gigl
LiF: GR Ira Shanker

The administrative office

Members of the AIB may use the Integration Office for administrative matters.

Address: Neues Rathaus, Hauptstraße 1-5, 4041 Linz
Telephone: (0732) 7070/2296 or 2297
Fax: (0732) 7070/54/2296 or 2297
e-mail: integration@linz.at

Office hours:

Monday, Thursday: 09.00 – 12.00 and 14.00 – 18.00 h
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 08.00 – 13.00 h

Contact persons: Mag^a. Gudrun Siegel-Kraft
Mag^a. Claudia Ziehengraser

For more information about the AIB Linz, see the Homepage of the City of Linz www.linz.at (under the point "Service-Guide" – "Ausländerangelegenheiten").