



Black Voices petition for a referendum

List of demands

Education

Since education can address and eradicate racism, teachers and students need to un-learn racism and practice anti-racism in order to make equality a reality. Inevitably, this urgent need for anti-racist education is required in all educational institutions.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. Educational work, anti-racism awareness, and critical reflections on privilege must be integrated as binding elements into all educational fields. The incorporation of these elements can be achieved through mandatory workshops or courses. In order to gain a critical understanding of anti-racist education, external anti-racist experts should lead these conversations with school leaders. Moreover, the teaching principle of "post-colonialism" should be introduced in Austria in order to create anti-racist classrooms with decolonized curriculums.
2. Textbooks, teaching and learning materials must be reviewed for discriminatory, racist, colonial and eurocentric continuities and, if necessary, modified. The diversity of the population and the inclusion of Black people and people of colour as equal must be portrayed and represented in all educational media, teaching and learning objectives.
3. Inclusive education, with a special focus on ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, must be integrated as a basic training for teachers. Compulsory education and training for educational personnel must be completed in order to raise anti-racism awareness, encourage critical reflections on privilege and promote diversity and multilingualism.
4. Segregative remedial classes in German must be replaced with joint German lessons that are tailored to the individual requirements and needs of all learners. Furthermore, equal opportunities for all students should be systematically promoted by a substantial increase in the number of hours for general remedial courses, as well as the expansion of all-day schooling and the development of lessons in the students' L1 (first language).
5. Efforts to increase the proportion of Black educators, teachers and principals, as well as educational staff of colour, need to be made.
6. Independent, external counseling and intervention agencies, as well as reporting offices for racist incidents in all federal states, need to be established. These bodies should be in place to handle young people, for example by processing requests or providing support via chat or hotline.

Representation and the general public

Since Black people and people of colour are just as much part of society as any other person living in Austria, they must be treated as equals and enjoy the same political, economic, social and civil rights as anyone else. This egalitarianism must be acknowledged in all areas of life. Thus the representation of Black people and people of colour in the media or in politics matters in order to close racial and ethnic equity gaps and reach equality within our society.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. The right to vote must be bound to the primary residence of a person. It is therefore necessary to establish the right to vote and to run for public office at all political levels after a registered five-year period of residence in Austria.
2. The proportion of Black people and people of colour in the composition of political bodies and supervisory bodies of companies, that are state-owned, needs to be noticeably increased. Special focus should be placed on the recruitment of Black women and women of colour.
3. Anti-racism representatives shall be appointed for all state institutions, ranging from the district to the federal level. These agents should primarily be Black people or people of colour.
4. The ethnicity (cultural background, nationality, religion and language, etc.) of perpetrators or suspects must not be identified in media reports.
5. Racist and colonialist street names (for example "Mohrengasse") or place names need to be renamed immediately.
6. Advertisements, marketing strategies, and other commercial media content that display Black people or people (especially women) of colour in derogatory, stereotypical, sexist, and/or racist ways have to be prohibited.

Health

Racism is a key contributing factor to the rise of mental and health disparities among Black people and people of colour. Discrimination based on race or ethnicity has an undeniably negative effect on the mental and physical health of those affected by it. Since the majority of medical research and medical teachings focus on white (mostly male) bodies, images of white men dominate medical textbooks. As a result, disregarded groups of individuals are at higher risk of medical malpractice and misdiagnosis, which in turn may result in significant damage or even lead to fatal consequences. Therefore, it is inevitable that the health care system must ensure health equality and adequate health care for all people.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. An important step towards health equality is the expansion and the increase of diversity in medical research, teaching, and practice in order to provide high-quality care for Black people and people of colour (based on the model of gender and pediatric medicine). In addition, it is vital for physicians to have a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the human body and of various skin tones in order to accurately diagnose darker-skinned patients and to be able to treat them appropriately.
2. State funding of research and studies that focus on the health of Black people and people of colour (including the effects of racial profiling and racism on the psyche) need to be re-designed and increased in order to improve the well-being of these groups.
3. Mandatory anti-racism workshops, changes in training and in-service training programmes for psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists must include physical and psychological experiences from Black people and people of colour, to support research and therapy.
4. In order to address racial and ethnic disparities in health care and to provide the best possible and individualized treatment (which follows a biopsychosocial model) for Black people and people of colour, anti-racism workshops and in-service training programmes must be made compulsory. This goes for medical practitioners in hospitals, in private practices and especially in general medicine.
5. Representatives for anti-racism must be present in the Austrian Medical Association, in hospitals, and in patient advocacy services. Additionally, an independent reporting office for racist incidents must be established.
6. To enable and motivate more Black people and people of colour to enter the medical field, government-funded support programmes (for example scholarships) should be offered at universities.

Job market

Diversity in the workplace is an expression of equal participation of Black people and people of colour. Employers, companies and enterprises must establish diversity as part of their corporate culture and ensure a racism-free working environment. Equality, diversity and fairness are key values that need to be promoted for a racially diverse workplace.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. Anti-racism workshops must be made mandatory for employers and employees of companies with direct or indirect state participation, in order to create an inclusive organizational culture. Furthermore, anti-racism workshops must also be made available to private companies by the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, with the participation of external anti-racism institutions and experts.
2. The percentage of Black people and people of colour in state-owned companies needs to be increased at all levels of the workforce. This principle must be centrally integrated, both in the organizational development and in the application processes.
3. Private companies that sustainably promote diversity in their workforce, should receive preferential (additional) public benefits.
4. Measures need to be taken to increase a greater recognition of the training and (academic) degrees held by immigrants in Austria.

Police

The police and the judiciary are inevitable in the fight against racism. Racist incidents, both inside and outside the areas of policing and the justice system, must be punished accordingly, and those affected must be provided with adequate support. All in all, security institutions must offer equal protection and assistance to all people.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. It is necessary to establish a psychosocial service by Black people and people of colour to provide access to mental and behavioral health care for Black people and people of colour who have been affected and traumatized by racist police violence.
2. A new and independent inspection and complaints body to monitor police misconduct must be established. In this respect, it is explicitly stated that this committee should exist outside the Federal Ministry for Internal Affairs, and only with selected experts. In the selection of experts, it must be ensured that Black people and people of colour with equal professional competences are given preference.
3. Law enforcement agents must face legal consequences and must be prosecuted in the event of misconduct.
4. Procedural facilitation for people affected by racist police attacks must be incorporated to allow rapid settlement of these matters.
5. Police officers must be required to wear mandatory body cameras and affix their service numbers to the uniform.
6. Anti-racism training, held by external experts, must become part of the police training. In the selection of experts, it must be ensured that Black people and people of colour with equal professional competences are given preference.
7. Public hate speech, facial expressions, gestures or body contact directed against the groups specified in Section 283 (1) of the Austrian Criminal Code must be charged and prosecuted. The prosecution of the offender shall be carried out at the request of the injured person, without the need to bring the criminal offense as a private charge, before the responsible criminal court. In the case of a private prosecution, the costs of the fee (270 euros) charged by the criminal court, must not be borne by the injured person who has suffered from the abuse.

Flight and migration

A human migration policy is the basis for an open and inclusive society. In order to create such a society, where all lives are valued, the human rights principles must be respected, propaganda against immigrants must cease, and refugees must actively be helped.

Therefore we demand the following:

1. The Austrian government must be committed to both the renewal of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and to the creation of safe and legal routes to Europe, in compliance with the human rights principles of the United Nations charter, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
2. Austria must actively participate in resettlement and relocation programmes, in particular by accepting refugees from overcrowded reception centers.
3. In order to create a socially cohesive society in Austria, all people with refugee or immigrant backgrounds must be included. This goal can be achieved through establishing government-funded German courses and expanding the offers of these language courses, extending offers for integration into the labor market and finally through granting asylum seekers more access to said labor market.
4. All people involved in asylum procedures must attend mandatory anti-racism training. These relevant actors include: police officers involved in the initial interviewing processes of asylum seekers; procedural officers of the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum; legal advisors and special counsel for returnees of the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services; judges and legal staff of the Federal Administrative Court, involved in the conduct of asylum proceedings; legal counsel those responsible for data collection for the Office of State Documentation, and specialists of the Federal Administrative Court. In general, psychological support and childcare must be provided for asylum seekers for the duration of the hearing and the oral proceedings.
5. Measures must be taken to combat incitement, racist violence and racist insults against asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, especially in election campaigns and political discourse. Such incidents must also be consistently prosecuted.