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Intergroup Relations and Intercultural Policies in Arnsberg, Germany



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Foreword

European cities, in particular major cities with strong economies, attract immigrants from all over the world. As a result, urban populations have become increasingly heterogeneous in ethnic, cultural and religious terms. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious structures of urban society are, on the one hand, an opportunity for cities. On the other hand, heterogeneity challenges a city's ability to maintain peaceful and productive relations among the different segments of the population.

For this reason, cities have a genuine interest in successful local integration practices. Therefore, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CoE), the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions ('Eurofound') formed the European network of 'Cities for Local Integration Policies' (CLIP) for migrants. This network, launched in 2006, brings together about 30 European cities in a joint learning process: through the structured sharing of experiences, the network aims to enable local authorities as well as national and European policymakers to learn from each other and, thus, pursue more effective integration policies for migrants at a regional, national and European level. The learning process is accompanied by researchers from six academic research centres.¹

The researchers at efms of the University of Bamberg are responsible for this report on Arnsberg.² Together with the contact person from the municipality of Arnsberg, Karin Glingener, an enormous effort has been undertaken to collect data for this report. Many officials from the municipality and the Foreigners' Advisory Council were interviewed during the city visit in February 2009, as the list at the end of the report indicates. They provided reports, statistics and comments for this report. Additionally, social partners, representatives of schools and kindergartens, migrant organisations, religious communities, the police and the media provided information and useful commentary. I would like to thank all those who have cooperated in providing valuable resources for this report and particularly Karin Glingener for coordinating the data search.

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Bamberg, April 30, 2009

¹ The European forum for migration studies (efms) in Bamberg, the Institute for Urban and Regional Research (ISR) in Vienna, the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) in Amsterdam, the Forum of International and European Research on Immigration (FIERI) in Turin, the Institute of International Studies in Wrocław and the Centre for Migration Policy Research (CMPR) in Swansea.

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1. Introduction

Urban populations have become increasingly heterogeneous in ethnic, cultural and religious terms. These multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious structures challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or maintain peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In this third module of the CLIP project, we are interested in the relations between different groups in the city, local policies established to deal with these relations, and the way in which representatives of migrant associations, religious communities and NGOs assess the local activities.

The concept of ‘group’ used in this CLIP module is rather broad, since “the term ‘group’ basically has two different meanings in the social sciences: on the one hand it stands for stable structures of interaction among persons, on the other hand ‘group’ is understood as a social category that does not necessarily imply relations among the persons that are included in the category. National, ethnic or religious ‘groups’ in a city would be cases of such categories” (Heckmann 2008: 3-4). Hence, ‘intergroup relations’ deals with relations between ‘real groups’ such as the city administration, the city council, welfare organisations, migrant organisations, religious communities and the police, but also with social categories such as ‘the Turkish group’ or ‘the group of Christians’.

As decided by the CLIP network, the relations to and dialogue with Muslim communities are a special focus of this module. This is due to the fact that Islam is by far the largest ‘new’ religion in European countries of immigration, and that Muslims are perceived as particularly disconnected from ‘European life’. Compared to other migrant groups, there are higher rates of discrimination and there is more prejudice against and fears of Muslims.

Led by these assumptions, the CLIP research group developed a questionnaire that has been filled out by city officials. The study at hand is based on the information collected by this questionnaire, on existing literature as well as on interviews with local experts conducted by the researcher in spring 2009.

Since the national situation has an important impact on the activities on the local level, the study begins with background information on Germany (cf. chapter 2) before delivering background information on the city (cf. chapter 3). The following chapters describe the city’s general intercultural policies (cf. chapter 4), as well as specific policies aimed at Muslims (cf. chapter 5). Chapter 6 illustrates communication strategies of the city administration and local media. Radicalisation, extremist political and religious positions, which can occur both among natives and migrants, are the focus of chapter 7. The study concludes with a summary and some lessons learned (cf. chapter 8).

2. Background information on Germany

The first section of this chapter describes the history of migration to Germany and the resulting societal composition in Germany; the second section summarises German integration policy.

2.1. History of migration and composition of migrant populations

Enormous migration processes have marked German history since the end of the Second World War. Between 1945 and the beginning of the 1950s, about 12 million German refugees and expellees came to Germany. Prior to the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, 3.8 million people migrated from East to West Germany.

Whereas migration in the late 1940s and early 1950s was closely related to the war and its consequences, migration from the late 1950s to the early 1970s was the result of labour-market processes. The combination of high economic growth and internal labour shortages led to a continuous and increasing recruitment of foreign ‘guest workers’: the first contract for the recruitment of guest workers was signed in 1955 with Italy. This was followed by agreements with Spain and Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968).³ The recruitment was stopped due to the oil crisis in 1973. At this time, four million foreigners were already living in Germany. In the 1970s, the process of family reunification occurred on a large scale, and, since then, family reunification has become another major channel of immigration to Germany. Nowadays, the second and third generation of these migrants live in Germany, and the foreign population still consists mainly of citizens originating from the former sending countries (Borkert et al. 2007: 15, Özcan 2007: 2 et seq.).

At the end of the 1980s, a new phase of German migration history began with the fall of the Iron Curtain. A large number of immigrants from Eastern European countries came to Germany, among them many ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler/Spätaussiedler*⁴). Between 1990 and 2007, 2.5 million *Spätaussiedler* came to Germany. However, in the recent past, fewer and fewer *Spätaussiedler* have been arriving (BMI 2008: 51).

Another large group of immigrants are asylum seekers and refugees. Between 1990 and 2007, 2.25 million people, originating from countries such as Yugoslavia, Iran and Afghanistan, sought (political) asylum. In 2007, about 650,000 asylum seekers and refugees were living in Germany (BMI 2008: 99, 116).

As a result of these immigration processes, the number of people with a migration background is continuously increasing. This number includes foreigners, naturalised Germans and migrants’ descendents. According to microcensus data from 2007, foreigners (8.9%) and Germans with a migration background (9.9%) represented a total of 15.4 million or approximately 18.7% of the population (Statistisches Bundesamt 2008b: tab. 1).⁵

³ The Eastern GDR (*DDR*) also recruited Contract Employees, as they were named, mainly from countries such as Vietnam. Immigration in the GDR was quantitatively considerably lower than in the Western FRG (*BRD*).

⁴ The terms *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler* refer to the specific dates of immigration (prior to 12/31/1992 and from 1/1/1993 onwards, respectively). The term *Spätaussiedler* has become the common term in everyday usage and is therefore used in the following to describe the entire group of *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler*.

⁵ Data concerning migration background has only been included in official national population statistics since 2005. For this reason, many of the statistics in this study only represent foreigners living in Germany and not the complete group of people with a migration background.

Figure 1: Migration background of the population (Germany, 31/12/2007)

Source: compiled by efms based on data of Statistisches Bundesamt 2008: tab. 1

Of the proportion of people with a migration background, about two-thirds have had first-hand migration experience, while the other third were born in Germany and have had no personal migration experience (Statistisches Bundesamt 2006: 75).

Immigration has led to a more diverse society in Germany, both in ethnic and religious terms. In the following the population's composition in terms of citizenship and, then, in terms of religious affiliation are described.

Neither the country of birth nor the ethnicity of immigrants is registered or analysed by official German statistics; official data only exists on citizenship. In December 2008, 82.1 million people were living in Germany: 75.4 million Germans and 6.7 million foreigners. Hence, foreigners represent about 8% of the population. Of this proportion, 34% are citizens of the EU. As shown in figure 3, Turks, with a population of 1.69 million, represent the largest group of foreign nationals (25%), followed by citizens of the former Yugoslavia (12%), Italians (8%), Poles (6%), and Greeks (4%).

Figure 2: Foreigners by nationality (Germany, 31/12/2008)

Source: compiled by efms based on data from Statistisches Bundesamt 2009: 30 et seq.

Immigration has also had an impact on the religious landscape in Germany: the (labour market related) immigration and the subsequent family reunification process from South-Western Europe raised the number of Catholics in Germany, those from Turkey brought

Islam in Germany and immigrants from Eastern Europe brought, among others, Jewish communities as well as Orthodox and (free) Protestant churches.

An exact number of each community's size cannot, however, be given. This is due to the fact that the German registry offices only register the membership in religious communities that are public corporations (*Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts*) and whose membership contributions ('church tax') are collected by the state. Traditionally, this is true for the Roman-Catholic and the Protestant Church in Germany. In addition to these two Christian Churches, several small Christian communities, Jehovah's Witnesses as well as the Jewish umbrella organisation 'Central Council of Jews in Germany' (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*) are 'public corporations'. Generally, every religious community can be granted this status by the *Länder* as long as it fulfils the required qualifications. In practice, however, most municipalities register membership in either the Catholic or the Protestant Church; all other religions, including Islam and Judaism, are registered as 'other'.⁶ The figures available for the number of Muslim residents in Germany are estimates based on citizenship and naturalisation statistics; additionally, the number of Muslims holding German nationality is estimated on the basis of the last census from 1987.

The Catholic and the Protestant (*Evangelische*) Churches are the largest religious communities: 25.5 million people are members of the Catholic Church (31%) and 24.8 million people are members of the Protestant Church (30.2%) (see figure 3). The third largest religion in Germany is Islam: about 3.5 million people in Germany are Muslims (4.3%). An estimated number of 1.5 million people are members of Free Churches (1.8%), 1.4 million are Orthodox (1.7%), and one million people can be categorised as adherents to new religions/esoteric groups (1.2%). The 0.25 million Buddhists represent 0.3% of the population; the 0.11 million Hindus and the 0.11 million Jews each represent 0.1% of the population. 24 million people are non-denominational or cannot be categorised (29.2%) (data of 2007; collected by the Theological Media and Information Service REMID: 2009b).

⁶ Some municipalities, e.g. Stuttgart, differentiate further and use the additional (small) categories 'other religious communities that are public corporations' (e.g. Old Catholic and Israelite) and 'unknown' (mainly children).

The Central Register of Foreigners (*Ausländerzentralregister – AZR*) does not record 'religion' at all.

Figure 3: Members of religious communities (Germany, 2007)

Source: compiled by efms based on data from REMID 2009b

Islam has become the second largest religion in Germany after Christianity, and the number of people stemming from Islamic countries has been constantly increasing. Hence, the size of the population alone makes it worthwhile to take a further look at Muslims living in Germany. This further investigation is also necessary, because the Muslims do not form a homogeneous group or community; in stark contrast, they are very diverse in terms of ethnicity and believe.

The main Islamic groups in Germany are Sunnis, Shiites and Alevis. The absolute majority of the Muslims are Sunnis: according to the Theological Media and Information Service REMID (2009a), about 2.64 million Sunnis live in Germany, according to the German Ministry of the Interior (BMI 2009), 2.5 million. Shiites constitute another large Muslim group in Germany: between 200,000 (BMI 2009) and 225,000 (REMID 2009a) of Muslims belong to this branch. The Alevis number between 400,000 (REMID 2009a) and 500,000 (BMI 2009) people. Other Islamic persuasions – such as the Ahmadiyya community with about 50,000 persons, the Sufi community with about 10,000 and the Ishmaelite community with around 1,900 – do not play a quantitatively significant role in Germany (REMID 2009a).

Differentiating national origin reveals the following picture: of the (estimated) 3.5 million Muslims, 1.8 million are Turkish, 160,000 are Bosnian, 70,000 Moroccan, 60,000 Iranian, 55,000 Afghan and roughly 1 million are German citizens (mostly former Turkish nationals). Thus, Islam in Germany has a largely Turkish character; more than 90% of the Muslims living in Germany are of non-Arabic origin (BMI 2009).

The organisational structure of the Muslim community is very heterogeneous and complex. In Germany, some 2,500 Muslim organisations and communities exist; the majority of these are mosque associations. Most organisations are incorporated within umbrella associations; the biggest and most significant are the Turkish-Islamic Union (DİTİB), the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD), the Islamic Council (IRD), the Association of Islamic Cultural Centres (VIKZ) and the Alevi Community (AABF). However, few of the Muslims

living in Germany (estimated 10 to 15%) are formally members of religious associations (BMI 2009, Deutscher Bundestag 2000, 2006).

2.2. National policy context

National integration policy is largely influenced by the societal definition of the immigration situation; in other words it is influenced by the perception of the ‘nature’ of the ongoing migration process by major active bodies in politics and society. During the migrant labour recruitment period there was a consensus in German society and in political circles that the residence of the migrants (‘guest workers’) would be temporary. For a long time, the official government definition was that Germany was not an immigration country. This understanding was strengthened by the German ethnic nation concept: the nation has defined itself as a community of descent with a common culture and history. Hence, for decades, there has been no wide-ranging ‘strategy’ for integrating immigrants and rarely any explicit policy improving intergroup relations (cf. Heckmann 2003). The same is true for policies regarding immigrants’ religions, namely Islam. “Because Islam was officially treated as a ‘guest religion’ that the state had no obligation to accommodate under the law, Germany was ill prepared to meet the religious needs of its growing population” (Fetzer/Soper 2005: 102).

Nonetheless, the integration of migrants has been officially deemed necessary since the 1970s and a multi-layered system of programmes and projects improving integration and intergroup relations has been developed over the years. Still, the main feature of the typical German mode of integration continues to be the incorporation of immigrants into the universal welfare policy; where migrant-specific measures receive less focus.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century the German mode of integration evolved into a more open and inclusive one: in 2000, the government introduced a more open citizenship law that is not only based on the concept of ethnic descent (*jus sanguinis*) but instead also includes the principle of birthplace (*jus soli*). In 2005, the *Immigration Act* (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) was adopted, which acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive integration strategy. As a result, a ‘National Integration Plan’ was then developed and adopted.

In addition to these developments, the Federal Ministry of the Interior initiated a German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islam Konferenz – DIK*) in 2006. The German Islam Conference is intended to be a communication process lasting several years between the government and representatives of the Muslim population in Germany, and aims at improving religious and social integration of Muslims in Germany. The German Islam Conference has 30 permanent participants – 15 representatives of the German government and 15 Muslim representatives. These Muslim representatives are from the five previously named organisations (cf. section 2.2). Since less than 15% of the Muslim population in Germany are members of an Islamic organisation, ten representatives of a modern, secular Islam from the private sector, society,

academia and the cultural scene were also invited to participate.⁷ Achievements of the German Islam Conference include an agreement on the necessary introduction of religious education for Muslims at German public schools, a list of suggestions concerning inter-religious community life as well as a common definition of ‘integration’. The German Islam Conference has generated a controversial discussion. While some politicians and Muslim representatives criticise the conference’s composition and doubt the necessity and/or sincerity of its goals, others applaud the conference as an important long over-due step in acknowledging the importance of Islam in Germany.

3. Background information on Arnsberg

This chapter provides useful background information on the city of Arnsberg. The first section gives a brief general description on the city (cf. section 3.1), the second section illustrates the composition and the characteristics of the local (migrant) population (cf. section 3.2) and the third examines Islam, the largest of Arnsberg’s newer religions (cf. section 3.3).

3.1. Brief description of Arnsberg

The city of Arnsberg is located in North Rhine-Westphalia, in Western Germany. It is a fusion of 15, originally independent, communities. Therefore, its structure is polycentric. On the one hand, it is characterised by a concentration and urbanisation along the Ruhr Valley, on the other hand, by the rural nature of the outlying settlements. The complete municipal area covers about 195 sq km, of which over 60% is forested. As of the December 31st, 2008, the total population of Arnsberg was 80,341 (according to unpublished data of the mayor’s office, 2009).

⁷ The 30 participants gather together in the plenary, the main board of the DIK, which meets once a year. Furthermore, there are four consulting bodies: three working groups, that work on the issues of ‘The German society and German values’, ‘Religious issues in context of the German understanding of the constitution’ and ‘The private sector and the media as bridge-builders for integration’ as well as a discussion group debating on the issue of ‘Security and Islamism’. These bodies meet every two months and consist of several members of the DIK as well as about 100 external experts and scientists.

Figure 4: Arnsberg



Source: <http://arnsberg.de>

The city is an important regional industrial centre and is known for its lighting industry. The local economy is primarily made up of small and medium-sized enterprises focusing on the wood/paper industry, metal processing, the lighting industry and electronics. In addition, Arnsberg has been a regional centre since the eleventh century, and has a long history as a regional centre for service-based industries.⁸ The regional government, state facilities, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as numerous courts of law are located in the city.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, the city has had to come to terms with a considerable shift in its economic structure. Approximately 5,000 jobs – mainly low-skilled – were outsourced. At the same time, the number of those employed in the service sector has increased. This increase, however, was not enough to compensate for the decline in the manufacturing industry. Slightly less than half of all gainfully employed persons are currently active in the secondary sector, and just over half are active in the service sector.

In January of 2009, the unemployment rate in Arnsberg stood at 9.0% (Agentur für Arbeit Meschede 2009: 17).

3.2. Arnsberg's migrant population and its characteristics

As in most German cities, immigration to Arnsberg began with the recruitment of migrant workers (primarily from Italy, Portugal and Turkey) in the 1960s. Following the end of this period of recruitment in 1973, most of these 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*) remained in the city and began bringing their families over. In the 1990s, immigrants to Arnsberg were made

⁸ At first for the *Grafschaft Arnsberg* (shire), then for the *Herzogtum* (duchy) of Westphalia and today for 3.8 million inhabitants within the *Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg* (administrative region), which encompasses the Westphalia Ruhr area including the cities of Dortmund and Bochum as well as the region of South Westphalia.

up of two groups: refugees from the former Yugoslavia and ethnic German migrants from Kazakhstan and other countries of the former Soviet Union as well as from Poland and Rumania, known as *Spätaussiedler*.

Reliable official statistics exist only on the number of foreigners living in Arnsberg: in December 2008, 5,270 foreigners lived in Arnsberg; which represented 6.6% of Arnsberg's population. The largest groups among them were Turks (14.8% of the foreign population), Italians (13.8%), Portuguese (12.8%) and Serbs/Montenegrins (12.6%), who were then followed by Poles (5.9%) and Greeks (3.9%).⁹ Altogether, people with more than 100 different nationalities live in Arnsberg (unpublished data of the city of Arnsberg, 2009).

Figure 5: Composition of foreigners in Arnsberg (31.12.2008)

Source: compiled by efms based on data from the Mayor's Office, Arnsberg

The city also records the number of ethnic German *Spätaussiedler*. Between 1989 and 2008, 5,820 *Spätaussiedler* (including family members) moved to Arnsberg (Glingener 2008). Because they 'disappear' from official statistics after receiving German citizenship, the city does not know how many *Spätaussiedler* still live in Arnsberg, how many have left the city, or how many have moved to Arnsberg after receiving their German citizenship in another city.

By also accounting for the number of naturalised people¹⁰ as well as the estimated number of (German) immigrant's descendents, the city estimates that 12,000 people with a migration background live in Arnsberg, representing approximately 15% of the population. Since these are only estimated figures, the following data will refer to foreigners and not to people with a migration background in general.

Compared to the German population, the foreign population is quite young: the proportion of minors is similar for both groups (18% and 20%, respectively), but the proportion of adults between the ages of 18 and 39 is considerably higher for foreigners (41%) than for the German population (26%). In contrast, only 6% of the foreigners are 65 years and older,

⁹ In absolute figures: 794 Turks, 733 Italians, 711 Portuguese, 663 Serbs/Montenegrins, 313 Poles and 194 Greeks.

¹⁰ Between the years of 2000 and 2008, 1,837 foreigners were naturalised (according to unpublished data of the city of Arnsberg).

whereas this age group constitutes 21% of the German population. The gender ratio is relatively balanced, even though slightly more foreign men than foreign women live in Arnsberg. The gender proportions of the elderly population are striking: 59% of the over-65 age group among the German population are women, whereas only 43% of non-Germans are female (unpublished data of the city of Arnsberg, 2009).

The German school system is known for being a rigid tier system that is based on early selection mechanisms: all children attend elementary school until grade four. Afterwards, they pursue one of three school paths – *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* – based on their school performance at the elementary level.¹¹ The entire school system does little to overcome educational inequalities caused by the varying socio-economic background of families, which can also be noticed in Arnsberg. The educational achievements of foreign students on average are considerably lower than those of German students. Only 2.4% of *Gymnasium* students (the highest level of schooling) are foreigners, while the percentage of foreigners at the mid-level *Realschule* amounts to 5.9% and a striking 17.8% at the lowest level of schooling, the *Hauptschule*. This means that foreign students are remarkably over-represented at the lower level of schooling and significantly under-represented at the higher level of schooling (Stadt Arnsberg 2008a: 10-11, data of 2006).

This low level of educational achievement is also reflected in the labour market: the foreign population in Arnsberg is considerably more affected by unemployment than the rest of the entire population. Arnsberg's overall unemployment rate is 9.0% (3,559 people), and foreigners constitute 21.7% (565 people) of that figure. Unemployed persons can roughly be further differentiated into the short-term unemployed (less than one year) according to the Social Security Code III – *SGB III* and the long-term unemployed according to the Social Security Code II – *SGB II*. In January 2009, 3% of the civilian labour force in Arnsberg was short-term unemployed according to the *SGB III*, and another 6.0% of the labour force was long-term unemployed according to the *SGB II*. In regard to only the foreign population, these figures were higher: 5.2% of the foreign labour force was short-term unemployed according to the *SGB III*, and 16.6% of the foreign labour force was long-term unemployed according to the *SGB II* (Agentur für Arbeit Meschede 2009: 23).

In Arnsberg, some inhabitants with a migration background created ethnic and/or cultural associations. There are three Italian associations, two Portuguese associations, one Turkish association and one association of ethnic German *Spätaussiedler* and people of Russian descent. Altogether, about 300 people are official members of one of these associations. In

¹¹ The *Hauptschule* is the least academic path; it is supposed to prepare practically-oriented students for an apprenticeship or a semiskilled career path. The *Realschule* is supposed to prepare students for a (mid-level) trade, technical or administrative profession. The *Gymnasium* is designed to provide students with an education which will enable them to study at university.

addition to these official members, their families and friends also often take part in the association's activities.¹²

The activities of these organisations are as diverse as their backgrounds. They include cultural or social activities, education programmes for children and young people as well as assistance for persons in the migrants' countries of origin. The most important aims, however, are to meet each other and to preserve their cultural heritage together.

Other migrant groups come together in one of the three Islamic faith-based associations: the Turkish-Islamic community DİTİB (*DİTİB – Türkisch-Islamische Gemeinde zu Arnsberg e. V.*) with the mosque 'Yeni Camii', the Islamic Arabic association (*Islamisch-Arabischer Verein e.V.*) and the Islamic Moroccan association (*Marokkanischer Kulturverein Arnsberg e.V.*) (cf. the following section).

3.3. Arnsberg's Muslim population and its characteristics

Immigration not only has an impact on the ethnic landscape in Arnsberg, but also on the religious composition of its population. Most of the religious communities are Christian: there are 21 Catholic and eight Protestant communities. Furthermore, there are three Islamic communities, three communities of Jehovah's Witnesses, two communities of the New Apostolic Church, one Free Evangelical Church, one Buddhist community and two Baptist communities. The Baptist communities consist mainly of people from Kazakhstan and Kirgistan.

There are, however, no reliable figures on each community's size. As explained in section 2.1, the German registry office only records membership in the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church; all other religions, including Islam, are registered as 'other'. Hence, there is only reliable data on members of the two Christian churches which are, by far, the largest religious groups.

¹² Associazione Italiana San Giorgio – AISGA (20 members), *Circolo Italia* (50 members plus family members), *Federazione Italiana Arnsberg-Sundern – FIAS* (an umbrella organisation of four Italian associations in the region; among them AISGA), Centro Desportivo Portugues (100 members plus family members), G.D. os Águias de Neheim-Hüsten e.V. (70 members plus family members), *Türk Halk Evi* (27 members plus family members) and Kultur- und Integrationszentrum Hoffnung e.V. (35 members plus family members and friends).

Figure 6: Religious affiliation of Arnsberg's population (2008)

Source: compiled by efms based on data from the Mayor's Office, Arnsberg

Most of the people living in Arnsberg are Roman-Catholic, as they make up 64% of the city's population. Another 18.6% are Protestant (*Evangelisch*), while 17.4% of the population is listed as having another or no religion (see figure 7). These figures differ significantly according to nationality: of the German population, 65.8% are Catholic, 19.7% are Protestant and 14.5% have another religious affiliation or none religion. Of the foreign population, by contrast, only 38.8% are Catholic and 2.8% are Protestant while the 58.4% majority have another religious affiliation or none religion.¹³

According to the city and the Muslim communities, at least 2,000 Muslims live in Arnsberg, stemming from 25 distinct nations; the largest group, by far, is of Turkish origin.

Only a few Muslims are, however, organised in a faith-based association: the Islamic Arabic association (*Islamisch-Arabischer Verein e.V.*) has 17 official members plus their families (most of them stemming from Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt), the Islamic Moroccan association (*Marokkanischer Kulturverein Arnsberg e.V.*) has 25 members plus their families. The largest association – the Turkish-Islamic community DİTİB (*DİTİB – Türkisch-Islamische Gemeinde zu Arnsberg e. V.*) – has 150 members (plus family members). About 40 people visit the mosque daily, and on Fridays there are up to 500 in prayer attendance.

Neither the city nor the Muslim communities themselves have data on the social status and socio-economic background of the Muslim population living in Arnsberg. Most of them, however, are former guest workers from Turkey and their descendents; thus, many of them are part of the working class. Consequently, it can be supposed that their educational background and their socio-economic status are below city's average.

¹³ In absolute figures: 49,371 Germans are Catholic, 14,814 Protestant and 10,886 have another affiliation or none religion; 2,045 foreigners are Catholic, 147 Protestant and 3,078 have another or none religion.

4. Local intercultural policies in general

Similar to most German cities, the city of Arnsberg does not have a formulated ‘intercultural policy’, but an ‘integration policy’. Within this framework, the city deals with the plurality of cultures and religions as well as with the dialogue between different groups.

In the following, Arnsberg’s general policy approach for integrating migrants and the responsibilities for this topic within the administration are described. The subsequent section gives an overview of the most relevant issues, demands and interests of the local groups (cf. section 4.2). Section 4.3 relays to the formal and informal relations and dialogue between the city and migrant as well as religious organisations and section 4.4 focuses on relations between different migrant groups.

4.1. General approach to ethnic and religious groups in Arnsberg

For decades, there was no specific strategy for integrating migrants or for intergroup relations by the city of Arnsberg. It was not regarded as municipal task. Migrant integration took place by including the migrants in the general welfare system, not by specific integration measures. This is a typical phenomenon of German cities.

Nonetheless, several activities have been carried out supporting migrants in their daily life and enhancing intergroup relations since the 1960s. The pioneer project was the local association *Internationaler Arbeitskreis Arnsberg (International Working Group)* that was created by a local teacher. This association, which today cooperates with other (migrant) organisations and the city administration, assisted labour migrants for getting settled and initiated the city’s important annual festival: the multicultural *DIES Internationalis* (cf. section 4.3.2). In addition to this organisation, several other local NGOs and local welfare organisations such as the Protestant *Diakonie* and the Catholic *Caritas* have been active in integration. Following the lead of the civil society, the city also has introduced integration measures, often in cooperation with local NGOs whose activities are highly appreciated by the city.

Influenced by the increasing public and political awareness of integration issues on the national level at the end of the 1990s, the city restructured its administration by bundling all migration and integration-related responsibilities, including economic, social and juristic topics, into one single office: the Office of Immigration and Integration, located in the department of general and social services. Parallel to the formation of this office, the city developed an official integration concept. This concept, adopted in 2001 and revised in 2008, defines integration as a mutual process and as a responsibility of both the native population and the migrants. The concept of 2008 has formulated five strategic goals:

- (1) Migrants should be able to establish a livelihood based on equality, self-reliance and independence.
- (2) Relaying necessary knowledge and skills should support migrants in their process of familiarising themselves with their new social environment.

- (3) Immigrants should be introduced to German democracy and its values as well as the possibility for civic involvement, while still being able to cultivate their own culture and identity.
- (4) All cultures need to respect one another. Social acceptance should be supported and inter-cultural understanding must be achieved.
- (5) Diversity has to be seen as an opportunity and a motor of change. These opportunities stem from learning and profiting from individual differences.

The implementation of these strategic goals is undertaken in six fields of activity: (1) language promotion, (2) education, (3) employment and qualification, (4) housing, (5) counselling in social affairs and health and (6) information/public relations.

Additionally to these policies of integration, the so-called ‘intercultural opening-up’ of public administration became a topic of interest in recent years. In the course of a project of North-Rhine Westphalia, the Cultural Office, migrant organisations and the Foreigners’ Advisory Council have developed guidelines for the enhancement of (cultural) communication between and appreciation of ethnic groups. These guidelines were adopted by the Arnsberg’s city council in 2007; the administration is obliged to respect them.¹⁴

To reach the integration concept’s goals and to fulfil the intercultural guidelines, the city is in close contact with local NGOs as well as with migrant organisations named above (cf. section 3.2). The mayor and the city administration consider migrant organisations very important and helpful both for organisations’ members and – as a point of contact – for the city administration.

The political responsibility for integration, diversity and intergroup relations lies with the mayor, since the city considers these topics, in particular the issue ‘using diversity as an asset’ as crucial. He takes active interest in these topics. No other elected person in the city council is appointed for these topics.

To revise the integration policy and to coordinate its implementation, an *Integration Steering Group* has been established. This group, consisting of the mayor, the head of the Office of Immigration and Integration and the administrative department supervisors, updates the integration concept and formulates future tasks. In addition, representatives of the municipality, NGOs, the Foreigners’ Advisory Council and the adult education centre (*VHS*) come together in three thematic working committees that set operative goals and initiate and conduct activities in the fields of ‘kindergarten and school’, ‘qualification, training and employment’ and ‘social and cultural integration’. The Office of Immigration and Integration is responsible for the implementation of the integration policy.

To organise the policy, the Office of Immigration and Integration has a budget of 30,088 Euro for municipal services and ‘allowances in kind’ (incl. the Foreigners’ Advisory

¹⁴ The guidelines are: (1) ongoing intercultural dialogue as a part of daily life, (2) intercultural competence for everyone, (3) intercultural work focussing on children, (4) respect of cultural identities, (5) opening of new ways and enhancement of engagement, (6) combination and reorientation of resources, (7) producing of public awareness, (8) improving cooperation and establishing useful networks, (9) ensuring quality, (10) enhancement of the administration’s intercultural competence.

Council's budget), 4,600 Euro for migrant organisations' needs¹⁵ as well as 660,900 Euro for the office's personal staff.

Since integration is seen and conducted as a cross-departmental task, many integration related measures are, however, not implemented by the Office of Immigration and Integration itself, but by other municipal departments such as the department of social services, the department of school, youth and family and the department of urban planning, construction and environment. These departments organise – and finance – integration and language courses, cultural events, neighbourhood management and other activities and supportive measures. The concrete budget for all these integration-related activities cannot be specified.

Despite the fact that about 15% of the population have a migration background, there are no elected representatives in the city council with a migration background. Their interests are only (partially) represented by the Foreigners' Advisory Council (*Ausländerbeirat*), which is made up of 13 members who are elected for a period of five years by the foreign community. About half of these elected members are of Turkish descent. The council may advise the city council and its committees in all matters of local politics; on petition, its proposals and positions must be considered. The relation between the city administration and the city council on the one side and the Foreigners' Advisory Council on the other side seems to be rather weak: members of the Foreigners' Advisory Council criticised that the information flow from the city administration and the city council to the Foreigners' Advisory Council is very poor, while the city officials regret the limited input and engagement of the Council's representatives.

4.2. Issues, demands and interests

First, this section gives an overview of the most relevant issues regarding intergroup relations that are discussed in Arnsberg and, second, on the demands and interests of local migrant groups. There is no survey or other kind of data on either of these topics. Therefore, the information is solely based on the interviews conducted during the CLIP city visits.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, a large number of both ethnic German migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union, known as *Spätaussiedler*, and refugees (mainly from the Balkan region) came to Arnsberg. This influx coincided with the closing-down of a Belgian military compound located in Arnsberg. After the withdrawal of the Belgian soldiers, many *Spätaussiedler* and foreigners moved into the former military housing areas.¹⁶ The resulting spatial concentration of non-German speaking people and of socio-economically disadvantaged persons gave these two quarters a rather bad reputation and initiated discussions on segregation and the influx of foreign persons in the local public.

At the beginning of the new century, these discussions were followed by a discourse about the allegedly failed integration of young *Spätaussiedler*: while most *Spätaussiedler* seemed to be well integrated – and hence 'non-existent' in public perception – some male, Russian speaking youngsters 'hung around', were drinking in public and became a concern for the

¹⁵ In particular for rooms and rental costs.

¹⁶ The main barrack was located in Moosfelde in the North of Arnsberg-Neheim, further housing areas were located in Gierskämper in the South of Alt-Arnsberg.

local public. The reputation of young *Spätaussiedler* was rather bad. This is still in the collective memory and almost every interview partner pointed to this. At the same time, everyone mentioned that the situation has improved.

In today's public discussion, by contrast, neither differences between religions and cultures, nor the relations between (migrant and autochthonous) groups seem to play a significant role. For example, the existence of the two small buildings used as mosques was never a topic of public debates.

As we shift attention to the demands and interests of migrant groups living in Arnsberg, we must emphasise the heterogeneity of the migrant population. Hence, its demands and interests are very diverse. Nevertheless, some issues were mentioned time and again.

One important aspect – named in a variety of interviews – is the demand for respect and acceptance in general and recognition of their activities. In this context, the imam of the Arabic mosque pointed out, “More important than having bread is the feeling of being welcome.” This wish was revealed by most interviewed migrants; however, they emphasised that they feel respected, accepted and welcome in Arnsberg – but improvements could be made.

Second, migrant organisations' demands addressed to the city include municipal support for finding and financing housing, including support for related unexpected costs for renovations (e.g. damage caused by water) and assistance for specific projects and festivals. The city is willing to provide such support (cf. section 4.3) and all interviewed migrants underlined the city's helpful support concerning these matters.

Furthermore, most interviewed migrants referred to migrants' challenges concerning the fields of housing, education and employment. These are rather problems on the individual level and do not – or only in an indirect way – concern intergroup relations. Nonetheless, they are briefly mentioned in the following, since they seem to be ‘typical’ problems for the migrant ‘group’ in general. First, the administrative staff and the members of the Foreigners' Advisory Council reported that migrants desire support in getting better housing, finding an affordable apartment in a non-segregated area and for solving problems with landlords or property caretakers. A second challenge rose by several interviewed experts, predominantly by migrants, is education, in particular the rigid German school system (cf. section 3.2). This system, in combination with prejudices of some teachers, makes it very difficult for migrants to follow the more academic path and graduate of the highest level of schooling, the *Gymnasium*. Third, migrants face more challenges when applying for an apprenticeship or a job. In particular, this is a problem for two groups: one the one hand for several Muslim women who wear a head-scarf, on the other hand for *Spätaussiedler*. The Muslim women believe they are discriminated against, and the *Spätaussiedler* find it extremely challenging to find an adequate job: many of the *Spätaussiedler* arrived in Germany with relatively high education – such as in the fields of education, medicine and engineering – but their qualifications are not or only partially officially recognised in Germany. Hence, they often have to settle for a profession that is below their original qualification.

4.3. Relations and dialogue between the city and migrant groups

As written above, both the mayor and the administrative staff appreciate the activities of the local migrant organisations – may they be religious or ethnic. The city considers them very important and helpful for organisations' members, because they provide networks and support. The migrant organisations, especially the organisation's leaders, are also helpful for the administration: since they are respected in the migrant communities and know their members quite well, they can act as bridges between the administration and individual members. Therefore, the city (a) provides (indirect) financial support and (b) maintains regular contact and pursues a policy of acceptance and recognition.

(a) Since the rental costs are an important challenge for the eight migrant associations, the city supports all of them by providing municipal rooms or paying a certain amount of the rental costs.¹⁷ Currently, the city provides municipal rooms for the association of ethnic German *Spätaussiedler*, the Turkish association 'Türk Halk Evi' and the Islamic Arabic association; the three associations only have to pay a symbolic rent of one Euro per month, plus one Euro per square metre for utilities. The other migrant associations in Arnsberg have their own rooms; 15% of their rental costs are covered by the city.

No other regular support is provided, but the city provides manpower and facilities (such as the local printing office) for finding direct, non-bureaucratic solutions for different kinds of challenge: for example, associations would be able to print event flyers in the municipal print office, and should they need additional money for renovations or for a specific activity, the administration and the mayor support them by collecting funds.

(b) The contact between the migrant organisations and the municipality is active and close on both the administrative and the political level. The staff members of the Office for Immigration and Integration, which is the connecting link between migrant organisations, other NGOs and administration and politicians, are in weekly informal contact with representatives of migrant organisations, either by phone or by direct dialogue within the administration office or the migrant organisations buildings. Furthermore, the staff members participate in activities such as neighbourhood activities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, roundtables and the Christian Islamic Dialogue.

Citizens' involvement on the local level is highly appreciated in Arnsberg. Thus, to his New Year's Reception, the mayor invites committed representatives of local organisations, associations or other communities that improved social relations in the city. The heads of the migrant organisations are always invited, as well.

In addition, the mayor accepts the regular invitations of migrant organisations to jubilees, celebrations and religious holidays. Once a year, the mayor also invites representatives of migrant organisations to discuss current local issues, to plan common activities and to get an impression of the organisations' needs. Moreover, the mayor follows an 'open-door-policy' – if migrant organisations' representatives require a direct conversation with the mayor, they can – according to both the mayor and the representatives – always approach him.

¹⁷ The condition is being a registered, non-profit organisation.

As a result of these contacts, the administrative staff and the mayor know the representatives of every migrant organisation, and the migrant organisations' representatives know the responsible administrative persons. Since Arnsberg is a small city, the informal, but frequent contact appears to be an adequate way of communication between the city on the one hand and the migrant organisations on the other. The administration, the mayor and the migrant representatives assess the contact between the city and the migrant organisations very positively. A strategy or institutionalised meetings to bring representatives of *different* migrant organisation together, to enhance intergroup relations or to initiate common projects, are, however, not established.

4.4. Relationship between different ethnic groups in Arnsberg

This section illustrates, first, the relationships between different groups within the city of Arnsberg; afterwards, it describes interesting activities and projects for improving intergroup relations. Since no surveys have been completed and no other data is available, the following information is based on interviews conducted during the CLIP city visits.

4.4.1. General overview on relationships in the city

Most respondents emphasised that the people in Arnsberg are, generally speaking, friendly, tolerant and open-minded. They agreed that at school, in the workplace and in sport clubs, there are good relationships between people of different backgrounds. It was indicated that relationships between different ethnic groups are peaceful and without severe tensions.

The local migrant organisations have established infrequent, but stable and positive relations with each other: they prepare the local international summer festival together, collaborate within the Foreigners' Advisory Council, and extend mutual invitation for jubilees, celebrations and religious holidays.

Difficulties occur in three areas: first, the large group of (Russian-speaking) ethnic German *Spätaussiedler* are hardly involved in these communication processes. This can partly be explained by the fact that they immigrated later than other migrants and up to now, they have been less organised: their first organisation was created in 2007. And since they are German nationals, they are not represented in the Foreigners' Advisory Council.

Second, there are relations between migrant organisations, but little contacts between migrant organisations and traditional local organisations. Unintentionally, some have an exclusive character. One such example of traditional organisations that creates certain barrier is the phenomenon of *Schützenvereine*. These are traditional clubs consisting of huntsmen and other people interested in hunting, shooting or just socialising. In Arnsberg, considerable parts of the population are members of one of these clubs and the annual festival (the *Schützenfest*) is very popular.¹⁸ The clubs are in close contact with each other and with the

¹⁸ The *Schützenfest* is a traditional big summer festival which runs for several days. Over the course of this festival, members from the associations compete in target shooting, involving shooting at a wooden bird. The winner of the yearly competition becomes the 'king of marksmen' (*Schützenkönig*) until the next year's competition. Primarily, though, it is a local summer fair with parades, carousels and – most importantly – beer tents. This tradition exists not only in Arnsberg, but also in other regions of Germany and other countries.

churches, especially with the Catholic one. There is no contact, however, with the local mosques and other migrant associations; migrants – as well as other ‘newcomers’ from other geographical regions within Germany – are rarely members of these clubs and thus unintentionally excluded from a rather crucial local activity and the related socialising.

Third, the stable relations between migrant organisations concern only a handful of migrant representatives – and always the same people. Their involvement in interethnic meetings has little impact on interethnic relations on the individual level: as a consequence of difficulties gaining a foothold in local society, or due to personal preferences, several migrants have formed visible groups with few ‘private’ contacts to people of other backgrounds. The interviewed representatives of migrant organisations and from the Foreigners’ Advisory Council, the administration, the police, the churches and educational institutions conceded that most immigrants remain ‘within their own ethnic group’ and that although interethnic friendships and marriages do exist, they are rare. It seems to be especially true of the two biggest migrant groups – the ethnic German *Spätaussiedler* from Eastern Europe and people from Turkey – who seem to avoid mutual contacts and have disputes with each other more often than other groups do. Irrespective of this, the interviewed experts agreed that there are no tensions in the city and that there is no one large ethnic group that is completely isolated.¹⁹

The respondents’ statements can be summarised by the appraisal of the mayor: “At school, in the workplace and in other institutions, there is a lot of contact between different groups. In private life, on the contrary, people organise most activities – I would say around two-thirds – within their own ethnic and social group. The existing contacts between groups are, however, positive contacts; there are neither conflicts nor tensions.”

Last but not least it is worthwhile to note that there is some contact between migrants and social partners. Especially the local trade unions have many members with a migration background and represent migrants’ concerns and interests. Specific religious and cultural issues, however, are not in the focus of social partners in Arnsberg. According to the social partners and city representatives interviewed, the social partners do not conduct direct intercultural or inter-religious measures and do not actively support activities to enhance intergroup relations.

4.4.2. Activities and projects for improving intergroup relations

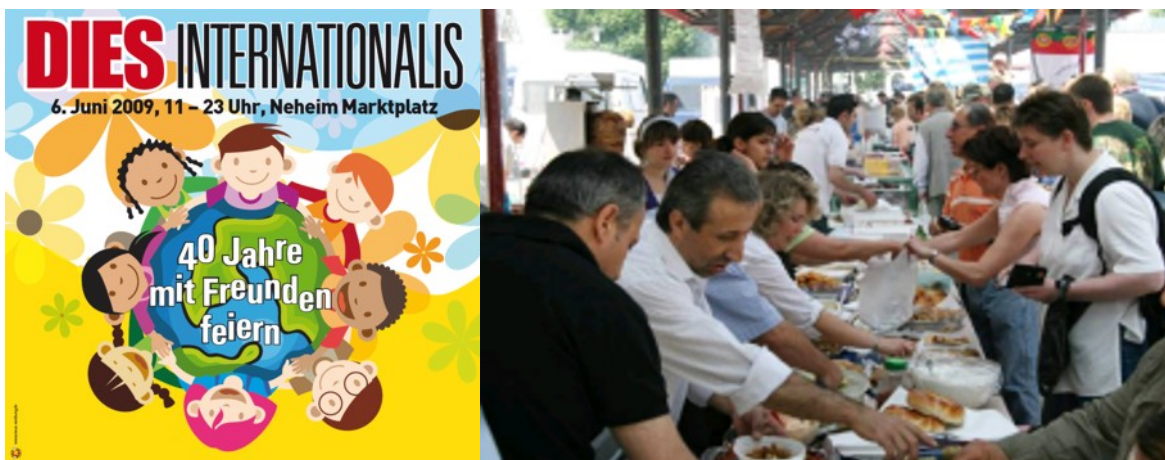
In Arnsberg, there are several activities, some of them recurring regularly, for improving relationships between different groups in the city. In this case study, the five activities that were mentioned most often in the course of the interviews, will be shortly described. The *International Cooking Night*, the *DIES Internationalis* and the exhibition *People en route* will be illustrated in the following; the two activities aiming at a better understanding of Islam and the daily life of Muslims will be subject of section 5.3.

¹⁹ One exception could be the small Baptist group in Arnsberg: according to three interviewed experts, this group has very little contact to other people and is the most insular group in town. The social segregation of its members, who originate from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, is not due to linguistic problems, but due to cultural differences of their very traditional community. (The separation of the sexes is very severe [some do not accept both sexes simultaneously in the same room], some children are not allowed to participate in swimming and biology classes and family sizes are very big.) According to the experts, this community prefers to have very little contact with others.

A good practice event mentioned in several interviews is the *International Cooking Night*. This activity is organised by the NGO *Internationaler Arbeitskreis* that is financially supported by the city (see above). About five times a year, around fifty people of many different ethnic backgrounds meet to cook and spend the evening together. These events are popular and assessed as good practice example due to two reasons: first, every cooking event has a specific cultural theme; each evening the group cooks dishes from one specific region. This allows the participants to get to know ‘new’ tastes and talk about different cultures. Second, each programme is led by different ethnic groups or by different social groups: several evenings were organised by people of Russian or Greek origin, other evenings were organised by youngsters of different ethnic backgrounds, others by men of different ethnic backgrounds. This cultural mix is a valued part of the programmes, as it offers all participants the chance to get to know persons with other cultures.

The perhaps most important activity for the city focusing on intercultural dialogue and intergroup relations is the local international summer festival *DIES Internationalis*, which was initiated by the *Internationaler Arbeitskreis*. Today, it is organised yearly by the *Internationaler Arbeitskreis* together with the Foreigners’ Advisory Council. It continues to be supported by the city of Arnsberg as well as by civil initiatives, churches, migrant organisations and local media.

Figure 7: *DIES Internationalis*



Source: <http://www.dies-internationalis.de>

The festival’s slogan is ‘Celebrate with friends’, the focus lies on offering numerous culinary and cultural highlights. In particular, there are many music events. The festival starts with a multi-religious prayer, held in cooperation by the priest from the Catholic congregation, the pastor from the Protestant congregation, the imams from the Arabic and Turkish mosques, a Buddhist monk and a Hindu dancer. During the almost yearlong cooperative preparation for the event, diverse groups with various ethnic, cultural and social roots come together and have the chance to get to know and appreciate each other. The *DIES Internationalis*, which was held for the first time in 1969, has become an integral part of the local cultural life. Some

interviewed persons conceded the festival's limited impact on day-to-day life.²⁰ Nonetheless, every interviewed person pointed out the festival's high relevance for the acceptance of other cultures and the city's character in general.

Aside from the *DIES*, there is no large recurring activity for improving intergroup relations directed at the majority population. Instead there are several singular projects. The two most recent projects were travelling exhibitions on the two largest immigrant groups: an exhibition on Muslims (*Quran Project*, cf. section 5.3) and another one on the group of the ethnic German *Spätaussiedler* (*People en route*). Both travelling exhibitions were accompanied by a variety of extended local activities.

The travelling exhibition *People en route – historic and present situation of Germans from Russia* was guest in Arnsberg for one and a half months in the fall of 2008. The exhibit informed its visitors on the history of *Spätaussiedler* starting from the emigration of German colonists to the east during the reign of Catherine the Great. In addition, their culture and understanding of identity was presented. The goal of the exhibit was to encourage dialogue and mutual respect between *Spätaussiedler* and other population groups. The exhibit was largely targeted towards school classes. In Arnsberg, the exhibit was opened by the city mayor, and featured performances by and two films showing interviews with *Spätaussiedler*, in addition to the main photography exhibit. One of the films was made by school children, who were first taught about filming techniques and then visited *Spätaussiedler* classmates and interviewed their families. The main exhibit as well as the other elements of the exhibit all received positive reviews from the city's residents. It is, however, very difficult to assess the influence of such projects of intergroup relations in the city.

4.5. Summary and lessons learned

Thanks to several initiatives, migrant organisations have established stable, positive relations with each other. On the individual level, however, this differs: most interviewed persons inferred that interethnic friendships still are seldom in Arnsberg. Generally speaking, people of different ethnic backgrounds would rather live 'side by side' than 'together'. All the same, relations between different ethnic groups are considered peaceful and harmonious; there are no visible tensions in the city.

As a consequence, neither religious and cultural differences, nor relations between different groups, play a significant role in public discussion. Instead, employment, education and child care are publicly discussed topics. These topics are, however, not discussed along 'ethnic lines'. Issues and demands raised by migrants concern mainly their structural integration, in particular the issue of (segregated) housing, finding an adequate job and accessing a good education. Social, cultural and religious issues are less prominent on the agenda.

The city of Arnsberg does not have a specific strategic policy explicitly aimed at better relationships between different ethnic or religious groups in the city. The groups are not brought together in a systematic way. According to the mayor and administrative staff, this

²⁰ As one interviewed migrant pointed out: "On the *DIES*, we are like a big family in Arnsberg. Such a wonderful day! But the day after, the people don't know each other any more."

absence of a strategy is due to the fact that the city has simply never thought about implementing such a policy, as no need has ever been identified.

Nonetheless, the city of Arnsberg conducts several activities aiming at encouraging integration and relationships between migrants and natives: it has established an integration policy and bundled all migration-related responsibilities into one low-threshold municipal office, the Office for Immigration and Integration. Moreover, the mayor and the office's staff developed a non-institutionalised, yet personal and regular contact with migrant organisations, pursuing a policy of acceptance and recognition. Additionally, the city supports individual informative projects as well as festivals. This combination of institutionalised structures within the administration and personal contact with the public seems to be one of the success factors in Arnsberg.

Another important strength of the city is the citizens' involvement in NGOs. The (migrant) associations and welfare organisations initiate a variety of projects – and the city has the good sense to support them and maintain dialogue with them.

5. Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

As explained in the introduction, the CLIP network decided to engage a special focus on the relations to, and dialogue with, Muslim communities. This is firstly because Islam is by far the largest 'new' religion in European countries of immigration and, secondly, because Muslims are often perceived as disconnected from 'European life', often facing discrimination and Islamophobia. Therefore, the following sections present issues, demands and interests of Muslim groups, the general municipal approach concerning contact with Muslims and examples of concrete activities and measures aimed at improving relations with Muslim groups.

5.1. Issues, demands and interests

First, it must be emphasised that the population with a Muslim background in Arnsberg is a heterogeneous one and, subsequently, the demands and interests are also very diverse. Second, it must be acknowledged that there is no research on the Muslim community in Arnsberg. Once more, the following information is based on interviews conducted over the course of this and former CLIP modules.

Several experts had the impression that a politicisation had taken place after 9/11. The consciousness of being Muslim increased and, possibly due to more discrimination and Islamophobia, religious aspects and traditions have gained importance. There seems to be more discussions on religious differences, more women wearing head-scarves, more discussions at schools related to swimming classes and so forth.

Muslims' issues and demands, however, vary only slightly from those of migrants in general (cf. already section 4.2): above all, they want to be respected and accepted. Additionally, they claim to face discrimination even more so than other groups do. According to interviewed Muslims, this is true in the fields of housing and employment, but also at school. More concrete demands addressed at the city include financial assistance for specific projects and

festivals and support for the envisaged construction of a new mosque building. Further requests that have been satisfied already are rooms for ritual ablution in the local hospital and a Muslim cemetery in Arnsberg.

5.2. General approach and policies improving relations with Muslim groups

The city of Arnsberg does not have a formulated policy focused on Muslims. The three organisations run by Muslims of Arabic, Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds are principally treated the same way as the non-religious migrant organisations. That does not mean that the city ignores the specific religious needs of Muslims. Rather, the city tries to make allowances for the specific needs of that group just as it would make allowances for the needs of other groups as well.

Two needs expressed by Muslims are mentioned above: a place for ritual ablution in a local hospital and a Muslim cemetery in Arnsberg. The city was happy to oblige these requests. The cemetery was established in 2002, the opening was celebrated by representatives from Muslim communities, the Turkish General Consul, Christian priests, the mayor of Arnsberg and other representatives of the city. The room for ritual ablution was also installed in the municipal hospital in 2002. The third concrete need expressed by organised Muslims is municipal support for the construction of a mosque. Since this project is just in its initial stage, no activity has yet been conducted.

According to several experts, Christians and Muslims know little of each others' respective religions. (As mentioned in an interview: "The people always raise the same basic questions: head-scarves, pork, celibacy of priests".) The city is aware of the knowledge gap and the existing Islamophobia. Nonetheless, it does not have a policy aimed at improving relations between Muslims and other groups. But the city has launched projects to enhance the knowledge on religions as well as the interaction between members of different religions (see below).

5.3. Examples of good practice projects and other measures for improving relations with Muslim groups

This section illustrates two interesting municipal projects aimed at improving relations with Muslims: the project *Between Minaret and Steeple* that resulted in an inter-religious dialogue and the more recent *Quran Project*.

In order to overcome the knowledge gap of Christians on Islam and vice versa, the city of Arnsberg, the Catholic and Protestant congregations, the Muslim associations, the NGO *Internationaler Arbeitskreis* as well as a Literary Association came together in 2000 and developed the ambitious project *Between Minaret and Steeple*. It was conceptualised as a series of events that should be interesting for a variety of different target groups. It included an exhibition and rather academic lectures and speeches on Islam in general, practice-relevant training sessions on gender issues and Islam, theatre projects with children at schools, music performances, cooking nights, an 'inter-religious walk' (visits of churches and mosques in Arnsberg) as well as a seminar for religious officials on the opportunities of an

institutionalised inter-religious dialogue. The activities were popular and were a starting point for further cooperation. The project received positive feedback from the public, including broad, enthusiastic media coverage.

One enduring outcome of this project is the establishment of the *Christian-Islamic Dialogue* in Arnsberg. It is organised by a Catholic priest, a Protestant pastor and both the Turkish and Arabic imam. The ‘initial spark’ was the cooperative preparation for the project *Between Minaret and Steeple* in 2000, which continued with the discussion and the ‘inter-religious walk’ over the course of the project in 2001, and has resulted in established relationships between the four religious communities. Obviously, the objective is of a better mutual understanding between each religious group: the differences, but in particular the similarities between the religions are of core interest. Discussion topics have been celebrations and holidays, the role of women, education of children and ‘common’ saints. One particular interest lies in discussing violence and terrorism, emphasising the peaceful nature of the religions and, thus, reducing prejudices. Not only should knowledge increase, but also the development of stable relationships and friendships between believers of different backgrounds and those people interested in the topics.

Figure 8: Leaders of the Christian-Islamic Dialogue



Source: Oest 2009

Some people cherish this dialogue and, step-by-step, relations have become stable and the initiatives have gained respect. The activities are, however, not conducted very often: annually, about three meetings with 20 to 50 people take place. Participants of every age are members of the four communities, representatives of the Foreigners’ Council and the city, as well as people interested in the respective topic.

The local *Quran Project* was organised cooperatively by the city of Arnsberg, the local Muslim organisations, the Central Institute *Islam Archive Germany* and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. This project that started in 2007 aimed at achieving a better understanding of Islam.

The project was comprised of a travelling exhibition titled *Translating the Quran – Bridges between Cultures*. It highlighted how the German translation of the Quran – and thus the perception of Islam in Europe – has changed over the centuries. The centre of the exhibit consisted of originals from the Central Institute *Islam Archive Germany*, complemented by texts, pictures and audio-visual presentations. In addition, the travelling exhibition was accompanied by an exhibit on Muslim immigration to Arnsberg and the Quran's relevance for Muslims in Arnsberg. This more personal exhibit was prepared in local workshops with Muslim residents who described their personal migration history and the role of the Quran in their everyday lives.

The exhibition that was opened by the mayor of Arnsberg and the Turkish General Consul was complimented by a widespread fringe programme, including training courses for teachers and cultural events such as theatre performances.

5.4. Summary and lessons learned

Islamophobia and little knowledge on Islam are current phenomena in Arnsberg. Vice versa, the knowledge that Muslims have about Christianity is also limited. There are, however, no tensions between Muslim groups and others.

The issues raised by Muslims do not differ from those raised by other migrants: they ask for respect and recognition, as well as equal opportunities regarding housing, employment and education. The Muslim organisations are happy to be supported in the same way that other migrant organisations are.

The city of Arnsberg neither has a formulated policy explicitly focused on Muslims nor institutionalised strategies aiming at better relations between Muslims and other groups in the city. However, the city agrees with experts, who complain that the little knowledge of 'other' cultures and religions, combined with prejudices and fears, is a problem. Therefore, the city initiated projects to enhance the knowledge and to stimulate exchanges between different religious groups. The projects received quite positive feedback.

Lesson learned are, first, that good personal contacts between the city and Muslim organisations can contribute to both acceptance of Islam in the public and peaceful intergroup relations in the city. Second, the example of the project *Between Minaret and Steeple* shows how a city – even with limited financial resources – can initiate a long-acting inter-religious dialogue contributing to inter-religious mutual understanding.

6. Public communication: strategies of the city administration and local media

Intergroup relations on the local level are greatly influenced by public communication. Public communication, in turn, is highly influenced by the city administration, (local) politicians, and (local) media: the city and the media affect or even decide what is reported, how to report, and also on what not to report. They influence how the native and migrant populations form opinions and are major actors in setting the agenda of public discourse on intergroup

relations. This chapter therefore examines the municipal communication strategy concerning intergroup relations, as well as media practices on both the national and local level.

The city of Arnsberg, however, does not have an official strategy for public communication concerning ethnic and religious groups living in the city. A general guideline in communication is ‘to strengthen the strength of the city and its residents’. This guideline is also followed when publishing comments on migrant and minority groups. This is, however, not an official rule.

On the representation of migrants in German media such as the national press and TV, several studies have been conducted. Most of these studies state that reports about migrants are biased and reinforce stereotypes about migrants, who are frequently portrayed as problematic groups or criminals; this factor is accompanied by the overrepresentation and related negative connotations of certain nationalities. Additional studies have been carried out on the representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. Similarly, these studies have found that in the media, Islam is often embedded in a negative context, thus creating an underlying image of Islam as threatening and worrisome. Already in the 1990s this phenomenon was identified by several research studies, but after 9/11, it is more obvious. Since then, the media discourse – both in TV and newspapers – is characterised by a shift toward a more negative representation of Islam. This is done primarily by an increased emphasis on topics that allude to an association between Islam and terror, violence, repression and anti-Semitism; and simultaneously the proportion of media reports offering a positive picture of Islam diminished (e.g. Islam as part of the European cultural heritage; Muslims as victims of terrorism or religious discrimination, call for inter-religious dialogue with Muslims) (cf. Hafez 1991, Halm et al. 2006, Lüken-Klaßen/Heckmann 2007, Ruhrmann et al. 2006, Schiffer 2005).

No study has been conducted on the practices of local media in Arnsberg. The following information is therefore based on the CLIP interviews.

The local media market is dominated by two local newspapers: the (previously more social democratic) *Westfälische Rundschau* and the (previously more Christian oriented) *Westfalenpost*. Today, both newspapers are part of the same publishing house, the WAZ Group, located in the city of Essen. Both have a small local editorial team in Arnsberg. Of the regular employed journalists, none have a migration background, and a regular contact with migrant organisations has not been established. This is unfortunate, since migrant journalists (or contacts) could deliver a different, interesting view of common, well-known things and function as a bridge between native and migrant residents. Moreover, migrants are excluded from positions that decide which stories are reported on and how these topics are publicly represented.

Neither of the newspapers has a specific strategy on how to report on ethnic and religious minority groups; the only internal guideline they try to follow is that in case a foreigner commissions a crime, his or her nationality should only be mentioned when relevant for the crime. The media also “follow general principles of tolerance”, i.e. they make efforts to report in a neutral way without disrespecting the people they report on.

In addition, the newspapers understand themselves as actors that also have to call attention to grievances. Therefore, they reported previously on migrants' bad living conditions in public temporary residential homes and other social deficiencies. According to the journalists, currently there is less of a need to focus on such topics, because there are fewer problems related to migrants.

Media do not only have to call attention to social problems, but can also report on good practice initiatives. This is done by local media in Arnsberg: festivals such as the *DIES Internationalis*, interesting projects of welfare organisations, the *Quran Project*, the travelling exhibitions and most other projects got an extensive and positive media coverage.

Since no regular contact with migrant organisations has been established, the media coverage on activities of migrant organisation is partly dependent on the media work of migrant organisations, but while some organisations report to the media representatives on their activities – and hence encourage the media coverage –, others do not.

Some interviewed persons criticised national media for the reasons analysed above. On the contrary, the large majority of the respondents with and without migration background were rather satisfied with the local media coverage. The ideal of not-mentioning the nationality in regard to covering criminal activity is not always implemented in practice, but in general, the coverage is assessed as being neutral or positive. In recent years, there were various articles to inform on minorities in general, religious celebrations and relevant legislation amendments. This coverage of local migrant festivals and initiatives for enhancing integration and intergroup relations had an interested and supporting tone.

7. Intergroup relations and radicalisation

Radicalisation and extremist political and religious positions can occur both among natives and migrants. As the following paragraphs will show, these phenomena do not play a role in Arnsberg.

7.1. Radicalisation within the majority population

May it be due to the – compared to other German cities – relatively small number of migrants in the city, or to the attitudes of the residents, a radicalisation process against minority groups has not occurred in Arnsberg. All respondents emphasised that Arnsberg is a tolerant and open-minded city, where xenophobia allegedly does not exist.

Still, fears, prejudices and latent discrimination (particularly on the housing and employment market) also exist in Arnsberg. Some interviewed persons referred to negative generalisations of certain groups ('the Russians', 'the Turks'), antipathy and a lack of friendliness, understanding or respect towards migrants. Moreover, there are individual non-organised persons who assign themselves to the right-wing scene. According to estimations of the police and other interviewed experts, they number about 25 and are of mixed age and primarily male. As said, they are individuals who neither are organised in a group nor plan common activities.²¹ According to the interviewed persons, organised violence, open

²¹ In the beginning and the middle of the 1990s, by contrast, there were some right-wing group gatherings.

discrimination, aggression or simply demonstrations do not occur in Arnsberg (cf. also sections 4.2 and 6).

Figure 9: Festival against nationalism, extremism and violence



Source: city of Arnsberg

On occasion, right-wing groups from other areas have come to Arnsberg: in 2007, neo-Nazis tried to recruit young people at school. This was quickly rejected by an initiative of the local pupils' representation. A bigger event was planned for summer 2001: neo-Nazis from Hamburg announced a demonstration in Arnsberg. The city and about 200 residents, representing about 100 associations, responded by organising the anti-festival *Arnsberg. Open to the world. Against nationalism, extremism and violence* with music, theatre, information stands and exhibits. Hence, attempts from external neo-Nazis to establish themselves or demonstrate in the city, have been rejected by the city and committed citizens.

7.2. Radicalisation within the migrant population

Hardly any information is available on radicalisation within the migrant population. According to respondents from the municipality, educational institutions, the Foreigners' Advisory Council, migrant organisations, religious communities, the media and the police, neither political nor religious radicalisation can be identified in Arnsberg.

Most interviewed persons – with Muslim background and without – realise that some Muslim immigrants are very religious and live in paternalistic family structures with 'traditional' role models. Both religiousness and the importance of traditional family structures seem to have increased in recent years. Some experts are bothered by this development and alert that it can be the breeding ground of social isolation, inner-family discrimination and even fundamentalism. Radicalisation, by contrast, has not been detected by any interviewed person.

7.3. Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learned

May it be due to the small number of migrants in Arnsberg, the attitudes of the native and migrant residents, or the fact that it just has not yet been exposed – none of the interviewed experts (including the police) could report on radicalisation tendencies among natives or migrants occurring in Arnsberg; in crime statistics, as well, no radicalisation can be found.

8. Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

The city of Arnsberg is located in North Rhine-Westphalia, in Western Germany. It is a fusion of 15 originally independent communities of which some are urban while others are of rural character. The local economy is primarily made up of small and medium-sized enterprises focusing on the wood/paper industry, metal processing and the lighting industry. Besides, it has a tradition as regional centre for administrative services.

As of the 31st of December, 2008, the total population of Arnsberg was 80,341. 5,270 foreigners lived in Arnsberg; which represents 6.6% of the population. The majority of these foreigners are former ‘guest workers’, who came to Germany between the 1960s and the 1980s, as well as their families and descendents. Most of them stem from Turkey, Greece, Italy and former Yugoslavia. In addition, many Russian-speaking ethnic German migrants from the former Soviet Union, known as *Spätaussiedler*, live in Arnsberg. Altogether, the percentage of people with a migration background is about 15%.

The people of different ethnic backgrounds rather live ‘side by side’ than ‘together’. All the same, the relations between different ethnic groups are considered peaceful and harmonious; there are no visible tensions in the city. Thus, neither religious and cultural differences, nor relations between different groups, play a significant role in public discussion. Issues and demands raised by natives as well as by migrant organisations (including the Islamic organisations) concern mainly migrants’ structural integration, in particular the question of (segregated) housing, finding an adequate job and accessing a good education. Social, cultural and religious issues are less prominent on the agenda.

Another phenomenon apparently not occurring in Arnsberg is radicalisation. None of the interviewed experts, including the police, could report on radicalisation tendencies in the city, neither among natives nor among migrants.

Hence, no need is seen to formulate an explicit policy aiming at better relationships between different ethnic or religious groups in the city. Nonetheless, the city developed an integration concept aiming at supporting migrants in ‘integrating’ in the majority society. This process was accompanied by bundling all migration and integration-related responsibilities into the low-threshold office, the Office for Immigration and Integration. This office initiates various projects and exhibits of which some have resulted in long-term, institutionalised activities and projects. The office’s staff and the mayor are in regular contact with migrant organisations, support them financially, extend and accept invitations and pursue a strategy of recognition and acceptance.

Out of the experiences made in Arnsberg, some lessons can be drawn for the CLIP project.

First, Arnsberg has various associations – both of natives and migrants – that the city benefits from: both kinds of organisations enhance integration processes by offering supportive measures and enhance intergroup relations by offering common activities. Examples of such associations include sport clubs, but also the local NGO *Internationaler Arbeitskreis* that initiated language classes, international cooking events and the intercultural summer festival *DIES Internationalis*. Moreover, the migrant organisations act as bridges between the city administration and the community. Hence, municipal contact to the organisations' representatives eases communication and the ability to solve problems. The city of Arnsberg appreciates the associations' commitment and activities and supports them actively by financial contributions and public recognition. Based on the experiences made in Arnsberg, such a support for and vivid contact with local associations can be recommended to other cities as well.

Second: even though associations have to be considered very helpful for integration processes, traditional associations unintentionally risk having an exclusive character. It can be reasonable for cities to try connecting established traditional associations with migrant organisations and to support the associations in recruiting members with a migration background.

Third, not only relations between migrant and native groups are of interest: the relationships between migrants of different backgrounds can highly influence the residents' feeling of harmony and security in the city. In Arnsberg, migrant representatives have established stable and fruitful relations with each other, but their involvement in interethnic meetings has little impact on interethnic relations on the individual level. Hence, a city should explicitly support peaceful cooperation between migrant groups of different backgrounds.

Fourth, it could be shown that intercultural festivals, informative events and an institutionalised inter-religious dialogue are of high importance for a city's identity and atmosphere. They can be symbolic signs of acceptance of and respect for migrants' cultures. As a result, they can enhance peaceful relationships between different ethnic groups. Hence, we can strongly recommend organising or supporting intercultural events.

As already mentioned in the context of another module of CLIP, the remarkable factor of Arnsberg's policy is not the officially formulated policy or the implemented measures, but the mutual respect of different local actors and their manner of communication and cooperation. This factor has been successful in positively encouraging peaceful relations between different ethnic groups in the city. To overcome the – often criticised – fact that people of different ethnic backgrounds only live 'side by side' and rarely 'together', the city of Arnsberg should build upon the established structures and initiate further forms of contacts between the manifold associations.

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List of persons interviewed

The field visit took place from February 9th to 12th, 2009. The 30 interviewed experts were the following:

Al-Kabbani, Adnan, imam from the Islamic Arabic Union ('Islamisch-Arabischer Verein'), head of the 'Christian Muslim Dialogue'

Arnoldi, Dr. Udo, pastor from the Protestant congregation in Arnsberg-Neheim, head of the 'Christian Muslim Dialogue'

Brandão da Silva, Sandro Paulo, representative of the Portuguese association 'Centro Desportivo Portugues Arnsberg e.V.'

Bruland, Bernd, director of the primary school Arnsberg-Moosfelde

Ceccato, Nicoletta, representative of the Foreigners' Advisory Council

Çekmez, Duran, member of the Turkish-Islamic Union DİTİB/mosque Yeni Camii

Decker, Jutta, staff member of the kindergarten 'Villa Kunterbunt'

Ersöz, Tarik, representative of the Foreigners' Advisory Council

Essers, Sonja, city of Arnsberg, staff member of the Office for Immigration and Integration

Falcone in Truglio, Lucia, representative of the Foreigners' Advisory Council

Glingener, Karin, city of Arnsberg, staff member of the Mayor's Office and CLIP city representative

Gosmann, Michael, city of Arnsberg, staff member of the municipal archive

Hagedorny, Eva, staff member of the welfare organisation 'Caritas-Verband Arnsberg-Sundern e.V.', department for integration and immigration

Hirnstein, Theo, chief editor of the local news section of the newspaper 'Westfalenpost'

Hörmann, Margarete, Trilux company, member of the works council; member of the trade union 'IG Metall'

Hueß, Dr. Ralf A., representative of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Arnsberg, Hellweg-Sauerland

Jachimski, Michael, city of Arnsberg, staff member of the Office for Immigration and Integration

Kersting, Claudia, staff member of the kindergarten 'Villa Kunterbunt'

Kleine, Peter-M., city of Arnsberg, staff member of the Cultural Office, responsible for the project 'Interculture'

Leopold, Ingo, staff member of the trade union 'IG Metall' administration office Arnsberg

Loerwald, Dieter, local policeman (responsible for the districts Müggenberg-Rusch, Erlenbruch and Moosfelde)

Moreira Fernandes da Silva, Dulce, member of the Portuguese association 'Centro Desportivo Portugues Arnsberg e.V.'

Oest, Heinrich, priest from the Roman-Catholic congregation in Arnsberg-Neheim, head of the 'Christian Muslim Dialogue'

Öyün, Nimetullah, imam from the Turkish-Islamic Union DİTİB/mosque Yeni Camii, head of the 'Christian Muslim Dialogue'

Pereira Coelho Couto, Maria, representative of the Foreigners' Advisory Council

Seif, Reza, BJB company; member of the trade union 'IG Metall'

Üzel, Ufuk, Trilux company, representative of the works council of youth and apprentices; member of the trade union 'IG Metall'

Vogel, Hans-Josef, Mayor of Arnsberg

Wisser, Bernd, city of Arnsberg, head of the Mayor's Office

Wulf, Stefan, city of Arnsberg, staff member of the Office for Immigration and Integration