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Area of action “Protection against discrimination“ Analysis of cantonal reports for 2014

With implementation of cantonal integration programmes, new measures for protection against discrimination were established and existing services expanded. In particular, this area of action includes support to victims as well as awareness raising activities. In 2014, the Confederation and the cantons spent around CHF 2.2 million.

The new area of action “Protection against discrimination“ entails conceptual work as well as aspects such as information sharing, awareness raising for government offices and the population as well as the creation of counselling services.

Advising victims

People who suffer from racially motivated discrimination should seek advice and support from competence centres and contact points. Such counselling services already existed in several cantons prior to 2014 and measures were therefore taken to further develop, expand or realign them. Other cantons are only now setting up anti-discrimination counselling services under cantonal integration programmes. Several different approaches are being used: central Swiss cantons, for instance, have adopted intercantonal cooperation agreements; other cantons outsource these services to third party suppliers or establish networks between existing counselling services. Extensive information and awareness efforts are needed to ensure that persons in need of counselling and victims of discrimination will contact a counselling office. In order to inform migrants and raise their awareness, information about counselling services is provided in welcome brochures or during initial information meetings.

Informing the parties concerned

In addition to information and counselling services for migrants, the various support measures linked to "Protection against discrimination" are also intended for government offices and the general public. The cantons support projects such as the annual action week against racism, events, podium discussions, exhibitions and specific campaigns. In many cantons, efforts are being made to address the topic of protection against discrimination in government offices and established frameworks so as to approach the issue in a motivating and constructive manner. The cantons are also considering ways to include protection against discrimination as an integral part of training courses on rights and obligations in government and in established frameworks. This is taking place within the framework of intercantonal cooperation. For example, cantons in French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking regions of Switzerland have drafted guidelines on protection against discrimination within the

public administration. These guidelines provide information, tips and checklists for development of an awareness raising strategy.¹

Guidelines for discrimination-free communication

In 2014, the Canton of Lucerne and the Canton of Zug worked with the town of Bern and the town of Winterthur on guidelines for discrimination-free communication. These guidelines are intended for government employees who produce documents for the general public and the media. These 24-page guidelines include practical tips and checklists for discrimination-free communication. Among other things, the examples presented in the guidelines show that discrimination-free communication should be addressed to the entire population and leave no room for misleading information.

Additional information: gggfon – Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt and Rassismus (together against violence and racism), www.gggfon.ch

Service for Combating Racism (SCRA)

In the area of action "Protection against discrimination", the State Secretariat for Migration is assisted by the Service for Combating Racism. Every two years, this body produces a report entitled "Racist Discrimination in Switzerland". The 2014 report provides specific details on measures taken under cantonal integration programmes to protect against discrimination.

Additional information: Service for Combating Racism, www.edi.admin.ch/frb/

¹ Working group comprised of cantonal officials responsible for "protection against discrimination" in French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking cantons and towns. Protection against discrimination: how to encourage, motivate or raise awareness within the public administration of issues pertaining to protection against discrimination. Lausanne, March 2015: www.frb.admin.ch (Available in German, French and Italian only).