



European Coalition  
of Cities  
Against Racism



Mayor Eckhard Graf  
Bürgermeister  
Unter den Linden 1  
23909 Ratzeburg  
Germany

17.09.2025

Dear Mayor Eckhard Graf,

The Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) thanks the City of Ratzeburg for its report within the framework of its coalition membership. The SAC further congratulates the City of Ratzeburg on its successful efforts to prevent and combat the evil of racism in and through its policies, administration and actions as corroborated by the report. The SAC also welcomes your city's report as a valuable source of inspiration for other members as it contributes to ECCAR's objective of sharing good practices among its members.

In their meetings on 30 June 2025, the members of the Scientific Advisory Council, Linda Tinio-Le Douarin (UNESCO Headquarters, Programme Specialist), Esther Pardo Herrero (Human Rights Resource Centre, City Council of Barcelona, as representative of the Vice President of ECCAR), Danijel Cubelic (Director of the Office of Equal Opportunities of the City of Heidelberg, Vice President of ECCAR), Paul Lappalainen (Expert of the European Equality Law Network, University of Stockholm, Scientific Advisor to ECCAR), Klaus Starl (UNESCO Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Levels, Scientific Advisor to ECCAR), supported by Jana Christ (ECCAR Office), assessed 35 reports of member cities submitted in 2025 with the following results:

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## General Observations

Based on the 35 reports, the SAC agreed on seven observations which are of interest to the reporting cities, the members of the coalition and ECCAR as a network of cities and local governments.

1. Cities from all over Europe report that ideologies of inequality propagated by political movements are on the rise and able to gain an increasing number of followers which presents a challenge for local authorities. Reported measures increasingly have a specific focus on racism as well as on the intersectionality between race and other markers of inequality such as gender, class and body or age. If administrations clearly address racism and intersectional discrimination this strengthens trust in local authorities. The SAC notes that these local policies are an important cornerstone of the resistance against politically fuelled racism. However, local authorities still need to strengthen their resilience against such ideologies by detecting and counteracting structural and personal discrimination. Safeguards against the abolishment of antiracist structures and the introduction of discriminatory instruments in decision-making, financing or services must be established.
2. Based on the reports of ECCAR member cities, the SAC observes that the European Commission's Action Plan "A Union of Equality: EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025" does have an impact. It can be seen directly through funding and local implementation of measures proposed in the action plan. Furthermore, the impact can be observed indirectly through the effects of multi-level-governance measures. The SAC specifically observes increased awareness of and implementation of actions against structural racism. In addition, the SAC observes more and better action plans, and a high interest in developing them.
3. The SAC also notes the growing number of small cities and rural areas joining ECCAR. These members not only show commitment through their actions, but also a motivation to provide detailed reporting. In doing so, they make an important contribution to exchanging practices, and more importantly, as laboratories of political action, they contribute to the development of new and promising practices.
4. In respect to the specific fields of action of ECCAR's 10 Points Plan of Action, the SAC observes a trend toward strengthening measures of vigilance and monitoring concerning the cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations which are related to commitment 1 (Greater Vigilance Concerning Racism) of the 10 Points Plan of

Action. The SAC observes substantial interest and efforts in doing research and collecting and monitoring data, including the establishment of equality observatories related to commitment 2 (Assessing Racism and Discrimination and Monitoring Municipal Policies). The reports reveal the trend to introducing or strengthening complaint and redress mechanisms for victims of discrimination related to commitment 3 (Better Support for the Victims of Racism and Discrimination) of the plan. Diversity management is increasingly acknowledged by local authorities as an important instrument for the protection of city staff as well as residents receiving services provided by the city. The health sector as a place where structural and personal racism in their intersecting forms occur receives growing attention. Both observations relate to commitment 6 (The City as an Equal Opportunities Employer and Service Provider) of the action plan framework. In relation to commitment 7 (Fair Access to Housing), housing is considered a common issue for all ECCAR members. Housing is scarce everywhere, and discrimination in the selection process is all too common.

5. Cities try to design their measures and initiatives in a more participatory way and increasingly seek to include those affected by racism as well as civil society members from the beginning of the respective processes. More and more institutionalised forms of cooperation are emerging, anchoring the perspective of those affected in municipal decision-making processes.
6. The SAC notes that the equality, inclusion and participation of Sinti, Roma, Yenish and traveller communities in society is receiving greater attention by local authorities. The reported measures contribute to the implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework (2020-2030).
7. Cities are placing more emphasis on the evaluation of their implemented measures. Increasingly, external agencies are being hired to provide professional evaluations.

In addition to the general observations based on the reports, the SAC would also like to highlight some of the expectations expressed and the exemplary commitment shown by ECCAR member cities. Small cities join ECCAR, develop actions, coordinate among themselves and report to ECCAR and thus, provide an important source of information and expertise on how policies work in more rural areas.

A common challenge is that awareness about racism tends to be lower in rural areas and access to racialised communities is limited.

Increasing diversity of city staff requires protection of municipal employees against racism. Furthermore, racist attitudes in society fuelled by political movements are on the rise and can pose a threat to municipal staff. Human resources managements in cities need to develop suitable strategies to meet legal requirements and their duty of care as an employer.

There seems to be a need for cooperation among ECCAR member cities and European institutions in the development and implementation of innovative instruments in the fight against discrimination in housing.

The reports have shown a huge demand for capacity building on how to successfully design the development of actions or action plans in a participatory way. The same applies to the evaluation of actions.

The SAC therefore recommends that local authorities:

- Engage in equality data monitoring and evidence-based policy-making;
- Strengthen and secure the internal and external redress mechanisms of administrations;
- Foster resilience of administrations against ideologies and policies of inequality;
- Carry out research and monitoring concerning the quality of municipal services;
- Invest in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, particularly in public spaces, including the virtual public space.

## Specific Observations

The SAC welcomes the first report of the City of Ratzeburg.

### Structure of report

The report follows the structure of the template and provides information on the City of Ratzeburg's structural and institutional setting and legal background in Level 1 of its report. The report gives a detailed insight into the activities of Ratzeburg within the framework of ECCAR before and, particularly, since its accession to the Coalition in 2024.

### Completeness

All questions are answered and interesting details were provided. The City of Ratzeburg reports on its administrative structure, its legal background and its expectations of and contributions to the ECCAR network and its members, including the establishment of the new Working Group "Small cities and Rural areas", which is much appreciated by the SAC. The SAC welcomes the detailed report about the current situation in Ratzeburg. The SAC appreciates the awareness and the preparedness for action of the local authorities, including the mayor.

### Specific topics

Besides the political strength and commitment to fight racism and discrimination, the report is highlighted and appreciated by the SAC. It is useful to other members of the coalition. It concisely and frankly stresses the challenges, approaches and strategies to overcome difficulties.

The SAC appreciates the engagement, the awareness and the human-rights-based approach taken by the local authorities in Ratzeburg. The SAC welcomes the set-up of the 10 Points Plan of Action and notes with interest the establishment of a working group tasked with the implementation of the plan.

### Good practice

The SAC assesses the establishment of the ECCAR Working Group "Small cities and Rural areas" as a good practice because of its relevance. However, the SAC recommends reporting the action in Level 2 of its report in order to fulfil the formal criteria for assessment.

The Scientific Advisory Council would like to thank you again for your report and for your commitment to the fight against racism and encourage you to continue your cooperation with ECCAR. The detailed feedback of the SAC is attached to this letter. We kindly ask the rapporteurs to publish the report of their city in the [Online City Reporting Tool](#) in order to allow other ECCAR member cities to learn from the local work of their city. Rapporteurs are free to decide whether to publish the SAC assessment alongside their report or not.

Sincerely,

The Scientific Advisory Council

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Esther Pardo Herrero (for the Vice President of ECCAR, Barcelona)

Danijel Cubelic (Vice President of ECCAR)

Paul Lappalainen (Scientific Advisor)

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