

ZARA presents its Racism Report 2005

More than 1.100 racist incidents were reported -

The number of people taking action against racism is increasing

For the sixth time, ZARA presents its Racism Report, which is the only annually published qualitative data source on the structure and extent of racism in Austria. More than 1.100 racist assaults were reported to the ZARA counselling unit of victims and witnesses of racism in 2005. The steady increase of the incidents reported shows that the pattern of awareness with regard to racism has changed. The number of people taking action against racist assaults and insisting on their right of non-discrimination is on the rise. Hikmet Kayahan, head of the ZARA counselling unit of victims and witnesses of racism, sees the incidents reported to ZARA as an important indicator that racism is no longer willingly accepted by its victims or witnesses. Unfortunately, the report 2005 evidences the shocking fact that racism has become less of a taboo and more aggressive, even though the cases documented only reflect the tip of the iceberg.

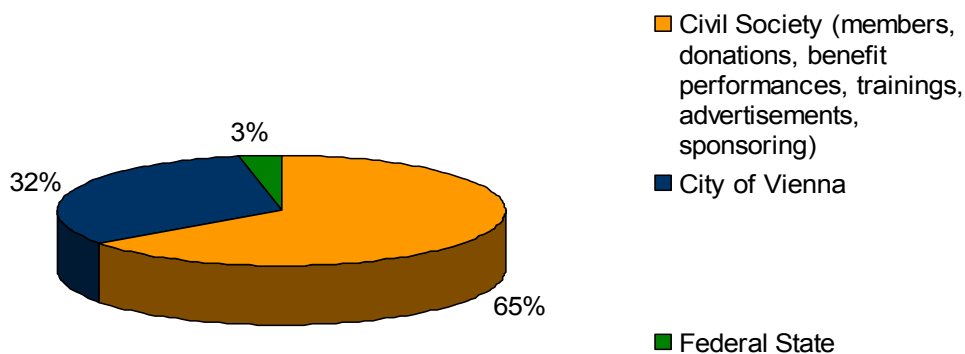
Unacceptable obstacles bar access to legal protection

It should be emphasised that the number of victims taking action against racism is increasing. ZARA tries to offer those affected by racism extensive support. Despite of the new legal opportunities (e.g. Equal Treatment Act) many victims face unacceptable obstacles barring their access to legal protection. Dieter Schindlauer, chairman of ZARA, explains that although the Equal Treatment Act prohibits many forms of racism, it is still a very courageous since risky decision to take legal action and sue out satisfactory damages. The outcome of the legal proceedings is rather incalculable and the risk of bearing the procedural costs has to be sustained by those affected. This is vital evidence for how the irresponsible handling of anti-racism work by the federal state backfires on those affected. ZARA wants Austria to take serious actions for improving access to legal protection. Schindlauer explicates that the existing legal basis has to be revised in order to give victims a real chance of being granted their rights. Not only those affected but also organisations supporting victims of racism are lacking monetary resources which are absolutely necessary for the enforcement of the victims' rights.

Civil society keeps ZARA alive

ZARA has to fight for its survival every year. Most of the work done by ZARA is still performed by volunteers. Thanks to vigilant private donors and sponsors ZARA was able continue its work in 2005. Kayahan says that ZARA is rather lucky as monetary support by civil society has doubled compared to 2004. The committed part of civil society has taken over the inactive federal state's contingent liability.

Financial basis of ZARA in 2005



The Racism Report 2005 can be ordered at:

ZARA – Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit
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The Racism Report 2005 can be downloaded free of charge as a PDF file at www.zara.or.at

For any further questions please contact:

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