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# *Integration mission statement*



TOGETHER





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### Foreword

When we speak of integration, one thinks primarily of linguistic integration, but in the same breath, acceptance of our societal values and our rule of law must also be demanded. The key to peaceful coexistence is therefore mutual respect and mutual understanding. The goal must be to enable people of different origins to have a common future. The integration mission statement has created a binding framework for all ongoing and future activities on the basis of clear action plans. However, the biggest challenge now lies in implementation: the measures that have above all been defined in the fields of education, the labor market, housing and health, must be actively lived and implemented.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved and who have already contributed greatly in the intense development of this mission statement.

**Günther Albel**  
Mayor of the city of Villach

### Foreword

The integration mission statement of the city of Villach was developed jointly by the citizens of the city of Villach, as well as by experts and disseminators from public and civil institutions as well as the political leaders of our city, and adopted by all of the parties in the municipal council of Villach. This mission statement has created a programmatic umbrella for integration work, which clearly formulates goals and attitudes. Furthermore, many concrete measures have been derived from this process and were implemented as a result. This mission statement is thus not a completion of a job, but I understand it as an essential task to continue development of this new modeling process time and again.

**Mag.<sup>a</sup> Gerda Sandriesser**  
The official in charge of  
Migration and Integration



## Starting point and Developments

### *Immigration as an opportunity - Villach through changing times*

Whoever wants to understand the present and the future of Villach should know the past of the city and therefore its initial position. The Alps-Adriatic region with the three-country corner of Italy-Slovenia-Austria is characterized both historically and linguistically by cultural diversity and mobility. Over the decades, the region has learned to preserve its traditions while still appreciating and cultivating the value of cultural diversity. This point is not only significant for the past, but also for Villach's present and future.

#### **FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT - THE FACTS**

**INITIAL POSITION:** Villach was the central traffic point in the border triangle of Italy-Slovenia-Austria. The city was like a "bridge" between north and south. An important point for the modernization of the region.

**CITY IN TRANSITION:** Several schools of higher education, even at university level, were founded in Villach.

A transformation began - from a railroad center to education and later, thanks to the semiconductor industry, to an IT city.

**TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE:** Large IT corporations settled in and around Villach. A decisive step for economic dynamics and the internationalisation of the state of Carinthia.

**CULTURE:** Alongside economic competitiveness, the city's success is also social dynamism. Shaped by many cultural influences from the Alps-Adriatic region, she has managed to develop her own flair and to be seen as a home for many nationalities.



#### **IMMIGRATION IN VILLACH -THE INITIAL POSITION**

**BALKANA:** It was not until the middle of the 1990s that Villach was confronted with immigration from abroad. As a result of the Balkan conflict, many fellow citizens from the former Yugoslavia found a new home here.

**GERMANY:** The second largest group of immigrants are German citizens. They are mainly active in tourism and trade. But Villach

is also a popular place of residence after retirement, due to its high quality of life.

**WORLDWIDE:** Highly qualified employees are indispensable for the semiconductor industry. Recruitment takes place around the world and brings internationality to Villach.

### **FUTURE IN VILLACH - THE REQUIREMENTS**

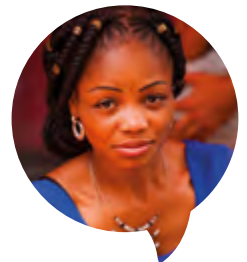
**NEWCOMERS:** Due to the demographic development of Carinthia, which has been characterised by a decline in the population for several years, Villach is not only shrinking but also ageing given the declining birth rate and rising life expectancy. Immigration can counteract this.

**QUALIFICATION:** Without immigration, the decline in working class people would lead to difficulties in filling vacancies - not only in the area of highly qualified personnel but also in intermediate qualifications.

We are therefore looking for well-qualified employees, regardless of their origin. A problem that is not only known in Villach, but is also addressed in many other cities.

**ATTRACTIVENESS:** If Villach continues to grow as an attractive and open city, well-qualified young people will immigrate.

**GLOBALIZATION:** The international link in many areas such as commerce, politics, culture, the environment or communication should continue to be seen as an opportunity to make Villach's future a successful one.





# Requirements for the integration policy



*What actually is the integration mission statement? Five questions - five answers*

## **WHY IS THERE AN INTEGRATION MISSION STATEMENT?**

The city of Villach has always endeavoured to improve coexistence and quality of life of all the citizens of this city. The integration guideline was created to clearly formulate the city's goals and attitudes and to create a basis for action.

## **HOW DID WE CREATE THE MISSION STATEMENT?**

Together with citizens, various experts and political leaders of the city of Villach. It is therefore not only a political opinion, but it is the result of a collaboration of numerous influences of our city. The municipal council and all parties have jointly approved the creation of an integration mission statement.

## **WHO SHOULD READ THIS BROCHURE?**

It is best to have as many people as possible read it, whether they are immigrants or not, whether young or old. The mission

statement contributes to the substantive "grounding" of the debate around immigration and integration and explicitly formulates the attitude of the city of Villach on these issues. In addition, it is also intended as a kind of help for all those who are new to the city and provide an overview of contact persons and reference points.

## **HOW CAN I GET AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTEGRATION MISSION STATEMENT?**

Integration concerns all of us. Whoever is interested in the fact that living together in our city is a valuable thing, should start with themselves. This mission statement can be an important first step towards a respectful, shared future.

## **WHAT MAKES THE MISSION STATEMENT SO IMPORTANT?**

Different forms of immigration pose different requirements for the city of Villach. The integration mission statement, on one hand, can be a way of reaching all those people with an international background who have been living in the city for a long time or those who are still quite new in the city, and to convey contacts or reference points to them, and on the other hand to clearly present the beliefs of the city of Villach.



## Guidelines



### *Villach appreciates...*

- ☺ *Diversity. With a common language and value base.*
- ☺ *Living together. With each other instead of against each other.*
- ☺ *Values that apply to all. Legally recognized and anchored.*
- ☺ *Language. German language skills and multilingualism must be encouraged.*

### *Villach provides...*

- ☺ *Autonomy. Same fundamentals for all.*
- ☺ *Fair opportunities. through integration into society.*
- ☺ *Integration. Against inequality and discrimination.*
- ☺ *Good conditions. towards autonomy and self-initiative.*

### *Villach accepts...*

- ☺ *Challenges. We see diversity as an opportunity.*
- ☺ *Fears and build trust. together for a higher quality of life.*
- ☺ *Integration is not easy. Diversity is also a source of friction.*
- ☺ *Ideas. Many cultures as a basis for growing together.*

## Villach appreciates...

*... Diversity. With a common language and value base.*

### **... LIVING TOGETHER. WITH EACH OTHER INSTEAD OF AGAINST EACH OTHER.**

The city of Villach aims to improve the coexistence and quality of life of all residents. People live in different ways, have individual goals and ideas - regardless of their origin, ethnic or religious affiliation. Villach has always been a city of many nations. Cultural diversity is a living tradition. It is important that all residents - with or without an international background - be accepted on the same level as Villach residents. Anyone who feels comfortable in his new home, his new environment, will be able to integrate into society more quickly and easily. Because in the long run, it is not the origin, but our common interests, needs, goals and passions that connect us to our future!

### **... VALUES THAT APPLY TO ALL. LEGALLY RECOGNISED AND ANCHORED.**

If a coexistence of many different nations is to function, it is important that everyone should recognise, appreciate and respect the same values, norms and rights. The city of Villach is committed to the values and norms established in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Federal Constitution.

These include, in particular, the recognition of democracy and the rule of law, freedom of expression, respect for the individuality and dignity of each and every individual, freedom from violence, gender equality, the rejection of discrimination and freedom of religion.

These core standards do not only represent rights and freedoms but also requirements and obligations for all. They can also not be limited or suspended due to homeland, culture, religion, tradition or ethnicity.

### **... LANGUAGE. GERMAN LANGUAGE SKILLS AND MULTILINGUALISM MUST BE ENCOURAGED.**

Knowledge of German is of utmost importance for successful integration. Whether for a first contact, integration into the new home, subsequent living together or starting a career - a common language is the basis for a common future. What should not be forgotten here is that the multilingualism of the immigrants is a valuable capability that must be preserved and promoted.



## Villach provides...

*... Autonomy. Same fundamentals for all.*

### **... FAIR OPPORTUNITIES. THROUGH INTEGRATION INTO THE SOCIETY.**

The city of Villach is committed to promoting equal opportunities for the entire urban population. In our society, professional and social opportunities are widely dependent on the level of education. Immigrants in particular often have difficulties because they lack the necessary knowledge, language skills and social contacts. Integration-enhancing offers by the city of Villach should open up access to all areas, provide the necessary knowledge for life in our city and our country and provide the necessary competencies. The different life situations, prerequisites and needs of the new people of Villach must especially be taken into account in the service offers. This approach is intended to give them help to help themselves and not to create relationships of new dependency.

### **... INTEGRATION. AGAINST INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION.**

Due to a "foreign" sounding name, a different skin color or linguistic accent, immigrants in everyday life are confronted again and again by open and hidden abasement and discrimination. The consequences are usually more

comprehensive than is apparent on first sight. This is because discrimination and inequality rob the individual from having equal rights in our society and thus the opportunity for successful integration.

The city of Villach therefore sees it as its task to combat inequality and discrimination and to promote tolerance and respect.

### **... GOOD CONDITIONS. TOWARDS AUTONOMY AND SELF-INITIATIVE.**

The offerings of the city of Villach for the reduction of barriers and the creation of a positive prevailing mood in the population are important prerequisites for coexistence and integration. At the same time however, there is also a corresponding self-initiative and self-responsibility of the immigrants, since the success of integration depends on each and every individual and on both sides. This also means making the best use of opportunities for social inclusion and actively contributing to the opportunities and living conditions.



## Villach accepts...

*... challenges. We see diversity as an opportunity.*

### **... FEARS AND BUILD TRUST. TOGETHER FOR A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE.**

If cooperation is to work, mutual learning, exchange and dialogue are compulsory for more understanding and knowledge. The growing diversity of lifestyles, languages, orientations, traditions and cultures that is reflected in all areas of life is an asset and a great opportunity for the city of Villach. Points of contact with the “new” people of Villach, interaction and joint activities alleviate fears and build trust.

### **... INTEGRATION IS NOT EASY. DIVERSITY IS ALSO A SOURCE OF FRICTION.**

The social, cultural and ethnic diversity is increasingly shaping the cityscape of Villach. What was trusted and familiar in the past can change and become unusually strange. Arrival and orientation in the new living environment are also full of questions and uncertainties for the new immigrants. Therefore, loss and alienation persist on both sides and shape the co-existence of all parties. Parallel worlds are often problematic, which lead to isolation and thus never to integration. Our goal: a balanced ratio between good cooperation and relaxed coexistence, in which there is space for individuality.



### **... IDEAS. MANY CULTURES AS A BASIS FOR GROWING TOGETHER.**

The diversity is not the problem, but dealing with it is. A foundation should be the option of discussing friction points and working out a solution together. However, managed conflicts are also the foundation for the positive development of a common future. To think and to reflect on one's own actions strengthens not only each person but also the community.







# Key terms - a brief explanation

*What does this really mean...?*

## INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

Integration is a process of rapprochement, mutual understanding, communication, finding similarities, identifying differences, and assuming shared responsibility. These individual steps on the way to the integration of immigrant citizens and the present population lead to successful integration. In contrast to assimilation (complete adaptation) integration does not require giving up one's own cultural identity. However, integration is a reciprocal process in which mutual appreciation and respect play a key role. Clear rules ensure social cohesion and social peace.

Inclusion is also a word often associated with integration. In inclusion, the equivalence and diversity of the people should find their place in our society and thus diversity should become normality. In social inclusion, each individual should be accepted by society in his or her individuality.



## MIGRANTS AND MIGRATION

People who leave their former places of residence individually or in groups to settle permanently or for longer periods in other places, are called migrants. Reasons for migration include violent conflicts or wars, persecution for political or religious reasons or even economic needs. If people cross the borders of their country during their migration, they are called immigrants or migrants from the perspective of the country they enter. From the perspective of the country they leave, they are called emigrants.

## ASYLUM SEEKERS

Asylum seekers are people who, in a country whose nationality they do not possess, are seeking protection from political, religious or other persecution. The international legal basis for asylum is the Geneva Refugee Convention. People with an ongoing asylum recognition process are called asylum seekers. After the positive conclusion of the asylum procedure, they are officially recognized to be entitled for asylum and as refugees. They are thus legally equivalent to Austrians.

## DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

The word discrimination means the inequality or abasement of people - also on the grounds of their origin. Racism, on the other hand, is an ideology that construes human skills and qualities and classifies them according to value. Racism questions equality and, in extreme cases, the existence of a group. Prejudice and discrimination are also consequences of racism.



