



Fact Sheet Briefing – Afrophobia in Austria

March 2016

This fact sheet is based on ENAR's Shadow Report questionnaire 2014/2015 answered by Otaia Sacko from *Radio Afrika TV*, including the results of qualitative and quantitative research.

Defining 'People of African Descent (PAD)/Black Europeans (BE) population' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (...) Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada and the Middle East."¹ The term 'Black Europeans' is used here to refer to Black people born or raised in Europe or with an EU citizenship. In some places the term 'Black people' is used to refer more broadly to all those individuals, groups and communities that define themselves as 'Black'. Accordingly, 'Black' does not necessarily refer to a skin colour so much as a sociologically constructed identity.

Key findings and examples

The PAD/BE population

- The latest estimates by the Austrian Statistical Office (2015) state that there are 55,000 people originating from Africa living in Austria. However, this information only includes people migrating to Austria from an African country and doesn't include Black Europeans with African heritage.
- According to this institution, in 2014, 706 PAD were naturalized, of whom 26.3% were born in Austria. In the same year in total 5,200 Africans immigrated to Austria.
- The PAD/BE population struggles to be seen as a significant group politically and is often included in the 'other' category in official statistics rendering their identification even more difficult.
- The media continues to use racial stereotypes and PAD/BE are often presented as drug dealers or prostitutes.
- There is a negative public perception of PAD/BE and it is reported that only 7.3% of the Austrian population have a positive image of Africans, whereas 58.7% see them in a negative way.²

¹UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

² ETC Graz. 2013. *Lebenssituation von „Schwarzen“ in urbanen Zentren Österreichs*. Available at: http://www.etc-graz.at/typo3/fileadmin/user_upload/ETC-Hauptseite/publikationen/Selbststaendige_Publikationen/ETC-Neumin-Web.pdf

Employment

- A NGO report published in 2014 shows that Nigerians are the most vulnerable group in terms of access to the employment sector. This is demonstrated by the fact that while 37% of people with Austrian sounding names are being invited to job interviews this is only true for 18.7% of people of Nigerian origin despite having the same level of qualification.³
- In terms of unemployment rates, statistics demonstrate that PAD/BE are three times more likely to be unemployed than the average Austrian with 18.8% in 2014.⁴
- The employment rate of PAD/BE (around 60% in 2014) is amongst the lowest in Austria compared to other ethnic minorities.
- According to a report of the newspaper *Der Standard* published in 2014, one third of 714 PAD/BE feel discriminated against at work.⁵

Education

- PAD/BE children are often under-evaluated, meaning that educational advisors are more likely to recommend a lower level of education or technical courses for PAD/BE children.
- The curriculum, and in particular the history curriculum, perpetuates racist stereotypes, ignoring Austria's involvement in slavery and colonialism as well as the positive contributions of African soldiers during World War I.

Policing and criminal justice

- The Criminal Code regarding the infringement procedure punishing acts of incitements to hate (§ 283 StGB) has been amended. This is the most significant amendment since the 1970s as previously incitement to hate was not punished. The amendment represents a long called for change by NGOs and the OHCHR⁶
- Several case studies show that PAD/BE suffer from racist violence and criminalisation by the police. For example, a Nigerian man was beaten up after defending himself against insults of a cashier. When the police arrived, one of the police men pushed the Nigerian to the floor. Another police officer handcuffed the Nigerian and shouted abuse, accusing the man of not speaking German and of being a drug dealer. The Nigerian man was brought in for questioning and was accused of behaving aggressively and cursing.⁷

³ ZARA. 2015. *Racism Report 2014*. Available at: http://www.zara.or.at/_wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Zara_RR14_web_fin.pdf

⁴ Figures available in a table at:

http://www.statistik.at/wcm/idc/idcplg?IdcService=GET_NATIVE_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=073886

⁵ Der Standard. 2014. *Viele Schwarze fühlen sich in Österreich diskriminiert*.

<http://derstandard.at/2000004551405/Viele-Schwarze-fuehlen-sich-in-Oesterreich-diskriminiert>

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2012. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination report on Austria. Available at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/CERD.C.AUT.CO.18-20.pdf>

⁷ To read the whole case study see *ZARA Racism Report 2014*, p. 31-32. Available at:

http://www.zara.or.at/_wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Zara_RR14_web_fin.pdf

Key recommendations

The government should:

- In partnership with civil society organisations, and according to data protection principles, collect equality data in order to annually monitor people of African descent/Black Europeans' outcomes in key social indicators as in employment, health, education and housing; and develop policies in response to persistent racial inequalities. Such administrative data should be cross-referenced with data from the Census. This will allow for people of African descent to self-identify in ethnic and racial categories rather than being labelled as "others".
- Improve relations between the police and black communities through awareness training, regular contact between police and communities and community policing approaches.
- Raise awareness and sensitivity of the police regarding past abuses perpetrated by the police against black people.
- Recognize the benefits of ethnically diverse communities and ensure that schools reflect the full diversity of their neighbourhoods.
- Integrate human rights education into education curricular in order for teachers to be able to raise awareness in children and develop respectful citizens.
- Develop factsheets on people of African descent in Austria, the role of Austria in colonialism and the slave trade. Raise awareness of black history and positive contribution to Austria/Europe through educational curricula.