

The Legal Integration, Political Challenges & Future Prospects of Islamic Religious Education in Austria



Speaking about.

... current challenges in the relationship of the State and the Muslim population share in Austria (repr. by the Islamic Religious Community - IRC) with direct and indirect impact on IRE.

... current challenges in the field of IRE (and its legal integration).

... future prospects for IRE.

Religious-Legal System of Austria

Structural Guiding Principles:
recognition of CRC → who exactly?
freedom of religion → how much?
exclusivity → who is who?
neutrality → even possible?
parity → what exactly?
secularity → what else?

CRC = legally recognized Churches & Religious Communities

16 CRC

9 Faith Communities

Religious Associations

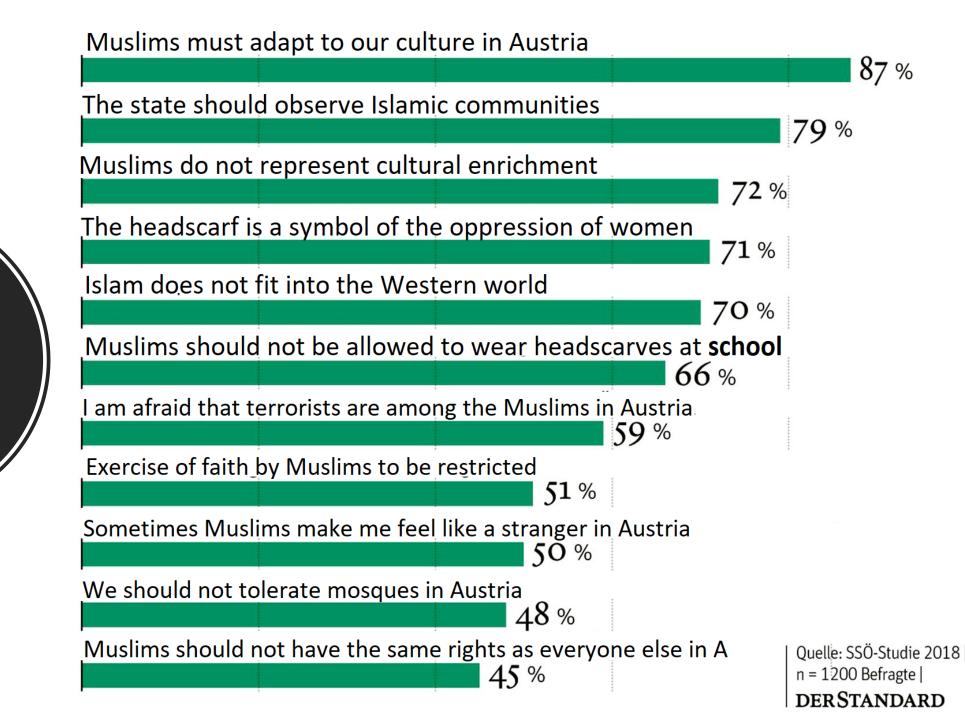
Current Challenges with "the Islam"

Demographic development (?)
Parallel societies (different cultures)
Problems in schools (generation "haram")
"Islamist" foreign fighters
"Political Islam"

Current Challenges for Muslims

- Ban of hijab in primary schools (CC) Fear of possible expansion!
- Changed abbreviation of the religious confession in school certificate (CC)
- Difficulty for IRE-teachers with hijab to teach a second subject (ban in discussion)
- Stigmatization by political parties (Anti-Muslim Racism & Ethno-Nationalism)
- General Coexistence with the majority society (What Austrian think?)

What Austrians think of Muslims



Basic Information about RE / IRE

Autonomy of Churches and Religious Communities:

- Provision & Management
 - **Appointment & Employment of teachers**
 - Compilation of curricula, textbooks & teaching materials
- Supervision of IRE content & methods
- Teacher training

State Sovereignty:

- Financial contribution
- Take-over of religious teachers
- School organization (e.g. supervision, creation of timetable & staff roster)

~ 600 IRE-teachers (~ 120.000) ~ 79.000 pupils/students (~ 1,1 Mio.)

Current Challenges in the field of IRE

Harsh critics on textbooks

Islamic Doctrine vs. Citizenship Education: pluralistic enough?

 Consequences of the shortage of IRE teachers (fulfilment of legal duties)

History of Islam and IRE in Austria

Integration Legal **BA/MA** for of IRPA into BA for New recognition Islamic IRE tertiary Establish-Curricular of Islam Pedagogy Theology education ment of IRE for IRE (Islam Act) (Innsbruck) level (UAS) (Vienna) 1912 1979 1982 1998 2006 2005 2011 2013 2014 2015 2017

Foundation of IRCA FoundationMA forof IRPAIRE(TeacherPedagogyEducation)(Vienna)

New Islam Act for IRCA & ALEVI "In the debate about one's own origin and belonging to the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IRCA), a contribution is to be made to the formation of identity which enables a **responsible**, **unbiased**, **tolerant and self-determined lifestyle** in a pluralistic society."

IRE Curriculum 2011

Future Prospects for IRE

- Textbooks & Curriculum of IRE are most probably revised after critics. Or an own publish house of IRCA will be found.
- Younger generations with stronger Austrian-Islamic identities will teach the next generations. New institutions?
- New upcoming forms of RE interreligious and intrareligious need a legal basis and organizational sensitivity. More interdisciplinarity?
- Ethics might be the complementary subject to pupils who don't attend RE.
- The Shiite Religious Community will be legally recognized and will offer another form of IRE.

