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DIVERSITY ON THE RISE: GERMANY IN FOCUS

Germany is now only second to the United States in the number of migrants it annually welcomes to its borders. Predominantly from other European Union Member States, migrants now account for roughly 16.3 million residents, or 20 percent of the German population, putting Germany on course to becoming one of Europe's most diverse countries. Against the backdrop of an uptick in far-right extremism, anti-Muslim marches, continuing anti-Semitism, and parliamentary efforts to introduce anti-migrant policies, Germany's diverse citizenry is stepping forward to make Germany more welcoming.

Germany's most recent national elections resulted in the election of 35 (of 631) parliamentarians with "migration backgrounds" – Germany's term for racial and ethnic minorities. Although this ratio reflects one of the highest rates of minority representation in the German Parliament in history, more work is needed, according to Parliamentarian (MP) Azize Tank, who has lived in Germany more than four decades.

"Because of our small numbers, it's important for us to work across party lines to support issues specific to minority populations in Germany, but it's difficult," said Tank. "There are traditions of building cross-party coalitions for other issues, but not this. We need for example to improve the education system for [minority] children which requires the support of multiple parties."

One of Berlin's Integration Commissioners, Gabriele Gün Tank, is working on similar equity issues at the local level. From city jobs for Germany's minority youth to fighting continuing neo-Nazi activities, she is the liaison for numerous minority efforts for the city.

"Beyond work, a big issue is retention," says Gün Tank. "Minorities are well qualified and we can find them jobs, but many experience discrimination, and there's still really no recourse for that. So they leave.... We are also fighting to be known as 'People of Color' – the term 'of migration background' makes us sound as if we are not German. We can be of a different color and German."



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*– German MP
Azize Tank*

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Germany in Focus, *continued*



Integrations Commissioner Gün Tank discusses her efforts in Berlin.



German Network Inclusion Leader participants discuss their role as change agents.



Each One Teach One youth following their performance at the Ballhaus Theater commemoration of the pivotal 1884 Berlin Conference to address African independence and black self-determination.

Last year Gün Tank joined forces with Daniel Gyamerah of [Each One Teach One](#) to form the Network of Inclusion Leaders (NILE) after taking part in the Helsinki Commission-supported, German Marshall Fund (GMF)-led, [Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network initiative](#). Now in its second year with the continued support of the GMF and other partners, NILE welcomes diverse college-age German youth with a commitment to inclusion and empowers them with tools for change.

Each One Teach One (E.O.T.O) supports similar goals for teens. Founded by Afro-Germans, the E.O.T.O library is one of Germany's only outlets for black literature; it is also fast becoming a meeting place for younger generations of Afro-Germans seeking change.

“Things are different. There are more of us now compared to my mother’s generation, but there are still problems,” some of the teens recently told local government officials who visited the library. “A lot needs to be done to address racism in schools. We should be part of the planning process to address that racism.”

E.O.T.O. teens also participated in the November 29 solidarity protest #FergusonIsEverywhere, led by the Initiative of Black People in Germany, to call for an end to racial profiling and for justice for German victims such as Oury Jalloh.

Last week’s Berlin Seminar: Leading Toward an Inclusive Economy and Workforce, hosted by the Germany Marshall Fund, offers one model of advancing the policymaking needed for a more diverse and inclusive Germany – and Europe. Tackling ongoing issues of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia as noted by the OSCE’s recent Berlin meetings on these topics is another.

About the U.S. Helsinki Commission

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