

Joint Report of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and the competent Commissioners of the Federal Government and the German Bundestag affected in their individual fields of responsibility (Section 27, sub-section 4, sentence 1 of the General Equal Treatment Act – AGG)

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, in consultation with the competent Commissioners of the Federal Government and the German *Bundestag* affected in their individual fields of responsibility, has decided to present the first Report pursuant to Section 27, sub-section 4 of the General Equal Treatment Act on the topic of ‘Multidimensional Discrimination’. In doing so, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency addresses a subject of topical interest, both from a political and a scientific point of view, and one which is exceedingly important for anti-discrimination work.

What is the report about?

Combating discrimination when it is based on a single discrimination ground, such as a disability, sexual identity or ethnic origin, already presents a major challenge. However, what happens when discrimination is based on the interaction of various, discrete discrimination grounds? It is rare that discrimination is based exclusively on a single discrimination ground. The experience gained in counselling centres shows that multidimensional discrimination is experienced by people on a daily basis. Discrimination experience is as multi-faceted and diverse as any one person’s personality.

Each person’s personality is comprised of the experiences they have had as a result of their (externally perceived) gender, age, religion, ethnic origin and the like. The reality of life is not one-dimensional. Every person is, perforce, a repository of several of the discrimination grounds contained in the General Equal Treatment Act as every person has a gender, an age, at least one ethnic origin and/or religion or religious convictions, and so forth.

The danger of being subjected to discrimination is not automatically always equally high for every person. In experiencing and undergoing discrimination, whether one does or does not fit into the perceived norm of the majority population as a result of one or more grounds of discrimination, can make a very big difference.

What does the report offer?

Investigations on the topic of multi-dimensional discrimination show that many questions in this area remain unanswered. Also in the practice of anti-discrimination work and before the courts, the handling of cases of multi-dimensional discrimination poses a number of challenges.

Among other things, the report provides basic approaches to answering the following question: what does it mean for persons who experience discrimination if they are discriminated against, not only because of their gender or their disability, but precisely because of their gender *and* their disability? Is it possible to identify certain combinations of grounds of discrimination to which discrimination is especially frequently attached? What possibilities exist for defending oneself in the face of such discrimination? Moreover, what challenges does this pose for counselling work and the dispute before the courts in such cases?

The report presented jointly by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and the competent Commissioners of the Federal Government and the German *Bundestag* points out areas in which the multi-dimensionality of discrimination plays a special role and recommends measures and procedures to address this dimension of discrimination. In doing so, it looks at the topic from various (work) perspectives and offers, in the Annex, the possibility of delving into the topic in greater depth within the framework of scientific investigations.

Outlook?

The clear result is that multi-dimensional discrimination can be observed and pursued only with diverse instruments and strategies. Dealing with multi-dimensional discrimination is the responsibility of society as a whole. Furthermore, raising the awareness of society as a whole requires a number of elements. These include: data collection, research and measures in the practical operation of counselling services and the courts, as well as training and further training. This report and its recommendations are intended as an impetus to have the topic placed on the political agenda and thereby contribute to expanding understanding and a corresponding increase in awareness.

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency's own contributions and those made by the competent Commissioners of the Federal Government and the German Bundestag to this report contain a range of recommendations, including recommendations that affect public relations and counselling work, research and data collection as well as legislation.

Additional Information:

The German version of the report is accessible => [here](#) in an electronic format.

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