



# **Mannheim Statement on Living Together in Diversity**

## **Introduction**

In its over 400-year history, the City of Mannheim has primarily been characterised by a coexistence in a spirit of openness and understanding. This self-understanding must be preserved and actively continued.

On the basis of the ideological and religious beliefs which advocate the welfare, respect and freedom of every human being, there is an obligation to create a successful living together in a society characterised by diversity. There is a particularly necessary, and indeed special responsibility, not only due to the historical experience of injustices in our city, but also due to the current excesses of group-focussed enmity, which demand a positioning and a commitment to counteract the exclusion and denigration of individuals and groups, such as is occurring in the form of racist, sexist and homophobic discrimination.

Numerous Mannheim initiatives, organisations and institutions, religious communities and churches, clubs and companies, have, for a long time now, been assuming the responsibility of encouraging and nurturing a mutually respectful coexistence in our city. Together, we, the undersigned, want to bring together the wide-ranging social commitment in our city for a mutual recognition and understanding of each other as part of an alliance. Through joint and/or co-ordinated public relations activities, we want to make the existing commitment much more visible. With this paper, we, the undersigned, declare our understanding and agreement to being alliance partners.

## **Recognition of the Equal Rights of Different Identities and Lifestyles**

In awareness of the inherent dignity and the fundamental rights of each human being, as they are expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we recognise the equality of diverse human identities and lifestyles. We declare our willingness to actively dedicate ourselves to encouraging their social acceptance, recognition and appreciation, thus promoting a respectful coexistence in our city.

## **Commitment to Counter Discrimination**

The coexistence in our urban community requires the care and dedication of all areas of our society. We want to contribute to an urban society, which is characterised by inclusion and solidarity. No one may be demeaned or discriminated against, particularly due to their social or ethnic origin, colour, gender, mental or physical ability, age, sexual or gender identity, religion or other beliefs.

### **Promotion of Equal Opportunities**

We firmly believe that every human being has individual and diverse potential. We want to create a climate in our city in which people can develop their potential and also have access to equal participation in the city's social life. An open and respectful discussion of the diversity of people expands the respective perspectives and promotes mutual understanding. In open dialogue and understanding, prejudices lose their power and mutual trust can develop. The positive approach to diversity is enriching and may additionally generate impetus for sustainable development in our urban society.

### **Limits of Tolerance**

However, the recognition, and this understanding of diversity, cannot be limitless. An essential characteristic of our liberal democratic and pluralist society is that tolerance stops when the behaviour or attitude of individuals, groups, institutions and structures is not in keeping with the values of our constitution and against the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Any incitement to hatred, violence and exclusion will be met with our absolute opposition and resistance.

### **Joint Action**

An equal co-existence can only succeed if a respectful and appreciative understanding is lived by everyone. We want to be role models in this respect and to encourage, and indeed ensure, such an approach in and between our initiatives, organisations, institutions, associations, companies and religious communities. The willingness for mutual understanding and a respectful relationship is indispensable, particularly in conflict situations. We try to resolve conflict through joint discussion.

As signatories, we want to work together in a voluntary partnership and to join forces to design a successful and rewarding coexistence. Making sure that we include any existing networks, and as part of our respective individual and structural possibilities, we want to not only be involved in ensuring the recognition of diversity, but also work against discrimination in Mannheim. It is our joint goal to carry the spirit of this declaration throughout our urban society and to promote an equal coexistence in diversity.