

## 'Who's in charge here?'

### Federal associations of migrant organisations: a navigation aid

#### Summary

Politics and administration are very keen to involve the associations of migrant organisations (MO associations for short) as partners in shaping the immigration society. The MO associations, for their part, want to be heard so that they can represent their interests. However, this mutual interest is currently not being channelled optimally. This is not least due to the fact that it is unclear how to categorise the large number and diversity of MO associations.

This study therefore aims to systematise the field of MO associations active at federal level and develop a typology: it examines how the profiles of the individual MO association types differ, which forms of political consultation and cooperation they particularly recommend themselves for and to what extent their different ambitions are also relevant in terms of funding policy.

To this end, an inventory was first carried out at federal level; 36 active MO federal associations were identified. The websites of these associations were then subjected to a two-stage qualitative analysis: Based on criteria from association research, the typology of MO associations was developed in the first phase. The second phase analysed how *mission statements*, claims of representation and practical work priorities (especially project work) differ between the various types. In addition, background discussions were held with representatives of MO federal associations and the federal administration. The analysis shows that, on the one hand, MO associations can be categorised in the general association system, but on the other hand they have certain special features.

The study identifies five types of MO federal associations:

- (1) **Diaspora associations (Diasporaverbände)**: They campaign for the recognition of migration-related diversity and aim to provide information about the living conditions of specific migrant communities in Germany and around the world. In addition to

focussing on integration and equal participation in Germany, their representation of interests and practical engagement are have a transnational focus.

- (2) **Group associations (Gruppenverbände)**: They make empowerment the leitmotif of their advocacy, focus on shaping the migration society and position themselves as experts in anti-discrimination and equality issues.
- (3) **Specialised group associations (Gruppenfachverbände)**: They focus on specific topics and fields of practice related to integration and equal participation (e.g. education or welfare) and position themselves as expert contacts for the planning and implementation of target group-specific integration policy measures (e.g. for parents from third countries, children and young people, new immigrants).
- (4) **Specialised umbrella associations (Spitzenfachverbände)**: They want to strengthen the practical integration work of MOs and lend weight to cross-community political demands that aim to reduce central barriers to integration in concrete areas such as education, health or work.
- (5) **Unity associations (Einheitsverbände)**: They want to raise public awareness of the post-migrant reality and are committed to promoting cross-community political demands that strengthen equal participation opportunities across policy fields (for example through a federal participation law or a law to promote democracy).

Diaspora associations, group associations and specialised group associations are closely linked to individual communities within the population with a migration background. This connection characterises their representation of interests and determines the areas in which they develop services to promote integration and participation. **In order to promote common interests more effectively, the majority of MO associations of these three types are also organised in cross-community umbrella associations (specialised umbrella associations and unity associations).** In order to further develop cooperation between the state and the various types of MO associations, this complementarity between community-specific and cross-community MO association types is an important starting point:

**Specialised umbrella associations and unity associations are important contacts for policymakers, for example when it comes to gaining an overview of cross-community sectoral and cross-sectoral policy demands, assessing the relevance**

**and urgency of reforming specific regulatory frameworks (e.g. in the area of healthcare or education) or identifying key levers to increase the potential of MOs (e.g. in the area of integration work). In order to understand the specific needs, problems and challenges of individual communities and address them in a targeted manner, however, policymakers should involve community-specific MO associations.** These associations and the MOs organised within them are also competent for the practical implementation of community-specific measures, such as pre-integration offers, target group-specific political education, combating anti-Semitism and racism within migrant communities or support with labour market integration.

The study revealed that the project work of all types of MO associations is heavily dependent on public funding. **In order to position themselves for the future, federal MO associations must find ways to diversify their sources of financing.** This also includes thinking about higher membership fees, philanthropy concepts appropriate to the field, alumni funding and the development of new partnerships, for example with companies.