

Our statement to the discriminatory motion of the RCDS' fraction in the student parliament

ASTA International stands against the exclusion of international Students in all areas of student's life. This is why we decided to write this statement in order to draw attention to the initiative of the student group RCDS presented in the first session of the 71st STUPA of our university.

On April 20th, during the first session of the legislature the fraction "Adenauer Kohl Konföderation 47" belonging to the student group RCDS (Ring Christlich-Demokratischer Studenten) presented a motion to modify the GO (Geschäftsordnung) and to add it to paragraph 1:

Zu § 1: Einfügen eines Absatz (8) mit dem Inhalt "Die Sprache der Anträge, Debatten und Korrespondenz des Studierenden Korrespondenz des Studierendenparlaments und seiner Organe ist Deutsch, begründete Ausnahmen sind möglich". (Insertion of a subparagraph (8) with the content "The language of motions, debates and correspondence of the student parliament and its bodies is German, justified exceptions are possible".)

Although this motion was rejected by the parliament, some votes were cast in favour of it. We consider this motion as an act of discrimination and exclusion towards the international students of this university, going against the aim of the JGU to create a more diverse community with access for all. The JGU in Mainz is home to more than 4000 international Students (which made 13% of the total students in the winter 19/20¹) and everyone of them should have been given the opportunity to participate in the students' council if he/she/they wants to do so without being forced to speak german or without being forced to give an explanation of why he/she/they needs or wants to speak another language.

The motion presented by Jakob Christmann does not respect any of the diversity strategies of the JGU and we want to make this very clear by presenting some statements that we collected.

The following statement belongs to the president of the university, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Georg Krausch, and makes very clear what the mission of the JGU towards diversity is: »Our participation in the audit 'Vielfalt gestalten (shaping diversity)' represents a clear commitment to the promotion of a diverse university culture. We have the opportunity to raise awareness for diversity and differences in creating a participative process which includes all members of the university. The project aims at bringing together existing measures and activities and to create a consistent overall concept in the field of diversity - we have just taken another step towards targeted diversity management at JGU.«

The next statements are from the diversity office from the university. The first one is an abstract of the philosophy of the diversity office at the JGU and the second one are part of the goals from the diversity strategy at the JGU.

"The Johannes-Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) values the cultural, social and individual diversity of its members. Our diversity strategy focuses on creating equal opportunities, fighting discrimination and abolishing exclusion mechanisms. Additionally, it aims at actively fostering a diversity-oriented

¹ https://universitaet.uni-mainz.de/files/2020/12/zahlenflyer_2020.pdf (last visit 11.05.2021)

teaching, learning, research and working environment, which includes the acknowledgement and support of different life styles.”²

The diversity strategy of JGU aims at the following:³

- All members of JGU – regardless of age, gender, race, national origin, social and ethnic background, religion, sexual identity and orientation, physical abilities and individual life style – should be able to participate fully and equally in university life.
- The homogenous character of academic environment is to be dismantled.

The last statement belongs the university mission at is the following:

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz regards itself as a European and an international university. This is reflected in its high proportion of foreign students and academics and their successful integration in the University.⁴

As you can see in all of the statements it's been said how important it is to embrace the differences among the university's population, fight discrimination and build a frame where everyone is welcome to participate, so that the very rich diversity of our university can be seen. It is very important that we all work together to abolish the homogenous character of the academic environment. The motion from Jakob Christmann works exactly against this goal, then it would have as a consequence, that even less international students will show interest to participate in the councils and in university committees. Even though the majority of the students in the council voted against this motion, we would like to invite every political students' group to help to build down the walls that bring us apart and try to invite more international students and get them involved! Ultimately it is the StuPa (Stuiderendenparlament, students council) the one that "[...] makes important decisions that affect all students of the University of Mainz.”⁵ Don't forget the motto of our university *ut omnes unum sint* and let us be and work together as one.

AStA International

² <https://www.diversity.uni-mainz.de/leitgedanke/> (last visit 11.05.2021)

³ <https://www.diversity.uni-mainz.de/diversitaets-strategie/> (last visit 11.05.2021)

⁴ https://university.uni-mainz.de/files/2020/09/JGU_mission_statement.pdf (last visit 11.05.2021)

⁵ <https://www.stupa-igu.de/english/about-us> (last visit 11.05.2021)